

# SMITH'S

## MAGAZINE

JULY - 1918  
15 CENTS

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*Next month:*

## "Whose Widow?"

A complete novelette, by Elinor Chipp—a big story of absorbing interest, in which a clever young woman impersonates another and unlooked-for complications ensue. In the background is the Great War. The story is one of the most striking and dramatic ever published in SMITH'S.

*Also:*

The August number of SMITH'S will bring to you ten short stories sparkling with variety, freshness, humor, whimsicality, drama, and thrills of one sort or another. It would be hard to find their equal, certainly between the covers of any one magazine. The new writers who appear are:

**Beatrice York Houghton, with "The Husband of Madame Cavalletti"**

**Edwina Levin, with "Just Women"**

**Oscar Graeve, with "Salvage"**

**Eliza Kent, with "Foghorn and Flute"**

**C. E. Scoggins, with "The Breath of Onions"**

**Catherine Carr, with "Kin and Kind"**

**Harriet Elvey, with "The Yellow Dispatch"**

Ellis Parker Butler and Winifred Arnold are the long-time favorites who contribute exceptional stories to the August number. No one should miss this latest story of the adorable Mrs. Radigan, who is one of Miss Arnold's most human and entertaining characters.

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PERHAPS a more important change, however, will be in the character of the magazine itself rather than in the price. The price increase has given us an opportunity to lay out a remarkable new fiction program for the magazine and to add new features.

BEGINNING with the August issue, SMITH'S will be a better, brighter-looking magazine. There will be sections of coated paper, permitting the use of half-tone illustrations. One of the new features will be a dramatic department—not of criticism, but one devoted to the illustration and résumé of some brilliant play that has made a big success on Broadway. This will be so profusely illustrated with photographs of the New York production, and the action and dialogue of the play will be so ably and completely set forth, that any woman who reads SMITH'S regularly may feel she is almost as fortunate as if she were able to spend an evening each month at a New York theater. Moreover, should she have an opportunity, she will know exactly which play she wants most to see.

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Vol. XXVII

# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 4

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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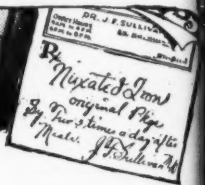
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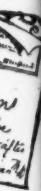
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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 27

JULY, 1918

Number 4

## A Summertime Romeo

By Grace Lea Arny

Author of "The House That Jack Built," "The One Chance," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

"It has been done before," said Ophelia, but the undertaking she attempted worked out as it had never done before. A story with glints of humor, romance, and mystery.

### CHAPTER I.

IN the early afternoon of a too golden day in June—too golden for comfort, that is, not for the æsthetic fitness of the thing—Ophelia went out to the summerhouse to await the arrival of a young man. The summerhouse stood midway between the shell road, with its adjacent trolley, and the beach, and one conversing there could not be overheard by the populace without being well aware of the fact.

Ophelia waited for the young man quite a while. It was exactly three o'clock, by the small gold watch she wore on a narrow black ribbon around her neck, before he alighted from the trolley and, unconscious that the tall girl in the summerhouse was waiting for him, strode off across the shell road toward the house.

She made no sound to call him, but watched his retreating figure with a critical eye. He was, to speak psychologically, true to type, which is to say he was something between five and a half and six feet tall, inclined to leanness, carried his shoulders with the sugges-

tion of a swing, and wore a Palm Beach suit and a panama hat. When, at the direction of some one in the cottage, he recrossed the shell road and came toward her, she saw that he was more than inclined to leanness—he was thin, and lines attesting to that fact drew themselves from the corners of intensely blue eyes and a pleasantly full-lipped mouth. When he lifted his hat, he revealed the fact that his hair was brown and combed straight back from a rather high forehead.

Ophelia, vitally concerned in this young man's appearance, missed no detail.

"Good afternoon," she said, and listened critically for the sound of his voice.

"Good afternoon," said the young man, and added questioningly, "Miss Perkins?"

That was Ophelia's title in the world of men. She acknowledged it with a slight nod.

"You came in answer to my advertisement?"

The young man admitted this to be

a fact and produced a pocketbook with several newspaper clippings as evidence. Ophelia disregarded the clippings and fixed the young man with the unfaltering gaze of a lady detective administering the third degree.

"What is your idea of a summertime Romeo?" she asked.

The young man dropped his hat. When he recovered it again, he was somewhat flushed, and he returned Ophelia's gaze with interest. It was not apparent to him, perhaps, that her hands were chilly with nervousness and her lips the tiniest bit dry. The hands looked slim and white and capable, the lips were red enough to defy detection if they should be dry. But he did realize that her eyes were clear hazel and wonderfully compelling. He forthwith betrayed the quick rapture of one who delights in repartee.

"And every tongue that speaks  
But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence,"

he quoted.

"But a summertime Romeo?" Ophelia urged.

"Would be one not liable beyond the season, I suppose."

Ophelia accepted the countersign. Gravely she motioned the young man to a seat. The summerhouse was a very rustic affair and well supplied with benches of the splintery kind. It was festooned with honeysuckle, just now sweet with bloom. Ophelia looked past the young man through those festoonings toward the rambling white cottage that was her home; and her lips tightened in a determined line. The white cottage, under its sheltering oak, was decidedly the worse for wear. Two green shutters hung indisputably awry, the front steps sagged, the lawn was overgrown with weeds.

"My mother," said Ophelia sternly to the young man, "keeps a boarding house. She has not been succeeding very well the past few years"—there

was accusation of the world in general in the way she said it—"and I am going to take charge of it for her this summer. She's on the verge of a nervous breakdown." Only polite interest, a suggestion of whimsical interest, showed in the young man's eyes, but Ophelia was sensitive upon this point. "I've been off at college!" she defended, then took up her theme. "We have an attractive home with large, cool rooms; our terms are reasonable; we have a wharf and a pier; the table is good. But we are *not* getting the boarders we should or keeping those we have."

The young man would have spoken just here, but Ophelia put out a protesting hand. She had not finished what she had to say.

"Mrs. Morton, two houses down the beach, is turning them away. At Cedar Grove—over there"—she gestured rather vaguely—"the house is full. Do you know why?" An amazing bitterness and scorn and indignation welled up in voice and eyes and stung her lips. "Mrs. Morton," she said, with slow significance, "has two schoolboy nephews in the house. On the beach at night, or on the porch where the vines make it dark, they look like men. Mrs. Agnew, at Cedar Grove, has a lame brother who is very interesting, they say. She is also a church member, and the visiting ministers all go there."

The young man interrupted her with a quick, spontaneous chuckle.

"You mean to say—"

"Men!" said Ophelia succinctly. "Just men!" It was most alarming, the amount of scorn and animosity she put into the word, the scorn that eloquence ordains should blast. The young man looked a bit uneasy. "That," she added, after a moment, "is why I advertised for you. I want to find a man—one who is willing to make himself attractive to the women who board with us. I'm willing to make exceedingly reasonable terms—the board will, in fact, be

no consideration at all—if he will stay here through the summer and make himself attractive.”

“Attractive?”

“Make love to the boarders—make them want to stay—be what the advertisement says—a summertime Romeo!” She rose suddenly and walked to the far side of the summerhouse. So standing, she looked down upon the young man, and that fact seemed to reassure her. His smile had grown a trifle disconcerting, even to one of her poise. She spoke with redoubled conviction from her vantage:

“The girls and women who come here during the summer—and I suppose it’s the same thing everywhere—expect to have a flirtatious time. They count the summer a failure that doesn’t hold at least one proposal, I’ve heard it said. They overlook the fact that the majority of men don’t take vacations, or that, when they do, it means a trip to some other city than their own—or fishing. When women do find a boarding house where there are any men—even one man—they flock to it! They’ll leave an infinitely more comfortable place, give no consideration to their meals—”

“I see!” said the young man. “I s-e-e!”

He looked away from Ophelia and out across the unruffled expanse of the sound, blue and motionless in the sun. Where the sun glanced on the waters, one caught the suggestion of countless winking eyes. The young man considered the unusual proposition, considered Ophelia, considered the rambling white cottage, all in a quizzical silence that told upon Ophelia’s nerves.

“I realize, of course”—Ophelia’s voice was still touched with scorn—“that the position is a delicate one—possibly dangerous. You’ll have to be very careful. But I suppose a man knows about that sort of thing.”

The young man nodded quite frankly

“Yes, he does. I’ve had a little experience in such things.”

For some unaccountable reason, Ophelia found herself flushing beneath his gaze.

“The idea isn’t new. It’s been done before,” she said, a bit hastily. “Of course, if it doesn’t appeal to you—”

“That wasn’t why I hesitated, I assure you. Though the whole thing is—unexpected. Might I ask if you have any of these lady boarders—my victims, so to speak—on hand?”

“Three—Miss Barton, a school-teacher about thirty-five; Mrs. Bidlowe, a young married woman; and—Urilda Smith. Urilda is just eighteen. Her father and mother are down in Central America. It’s Urilda,” said Ophelia conscientiously, “with whom you would have need to be most careful.”

“H’m-m-m!” said the young man. “And do you think I’ll do for the part?”

He shot the question at her suddenly and smiled ingratiatingly as if he were offering her a sample of his wares. But Ophelia was proof against such wiles. Romeos, she would have told you, were not in her line.

“Suppose,” she said, “that we try it? If you’re dissatisfied—or if I am—it’ll be a simple matter for you to leave. Now, if you’ll tell me your name—”

“Er—just a suggestion. What do you think of using some ornamental name—say Thornwell Dare. That ought to catch the feminine fancy. Give you my word I’m an honest man in private life. I won’t steal your silver spoons!”

“Do you think, after eight years of boarders, that we *have* any silver spoons?” asked Ophelia.

Now that the interview was practically over, she was a thought more gracious. There was a noticeable color in her cheeks; her eyes relaxed their vigilance and allowed the black brows to arch effectively when she spoke. Her



lips parted prettily enough when she allowed herself to laugh.

She arranged the details of her plan with Thornwell Dare—for so he was to be called—with characteristic decision, but when he rose to go—indeed, he had already gone, was several paces down the road—she took one hasty step from the summerhouse after him.

"Mr. Dare!" she called.

And when he turned and came back, she blushed a glorious red and displayed

"We're to have another boarder," she announced, "a Mr. Dare——"

The statement, in the moment of its making, drew the eyes of the ladies from the doorway through which the maid must enter to Ophelia's face.

"Dare?" said Mrs. Bidlowe. "That couldn't, by any chance, be Jimmy Dare?"

It was not, Ophelia assured her, Jimmy Dare.

"Dare is a good old Virginia name,"



Ophelia shot her dart. "We're to have another boarder," she announced, "a Mr. Dare——"

unbelievable trepidation and lack of poise, despite the defiant tilting of her chin.

"I—— My mother doesn't know I'm doing this," she said.

## CHAPTER II.

At the psychological moment when the meat and vegetables had been removed and the fate of sliced oranges and bananas or tapioca pudding was in the minds of all the boarders, Ophelia shot her dart.

said Miss Barton. Her pudding—it *was* tapioca pudding that day—was before her now, and she attacked it in a ladylike manner, the little finger quirked outward from the spoon. "There was a John Dare quite prominent in Colonial affairs."

"This," said Ophelia, silencing conjecture, "is Thornwell Dare!"

"What a perfectly fascinating name!" cried Urilda Smith.

From her place at the head of the table, Mrs. Perkins smiled somewhat wanly upon them all. She was a fragile,



gray-haired little lady, with nothing of Ophelia's gypsy coloring, nothing of Ophelia's cool assurance and poise. Her eyes might once have been blue, but they were sadly faded now, and her hands were patently incapable, fluttery little hands.

"It is a real pretty name," she said. "It reminds me, Ophelia, of a name out of a book—or one you might have just made up. Some people are so fond of naming their children that way. Your father now—I think he named you out of one of Shakespeare's plays. If you'd been a boy, you were to have been Hamlet. Your poor father was so fond of Shakespeare!"

Urilda seized an opportunity to speak across a reminiscent pause.

"Is he married?" she wanted to know, regarding the young man and not Ophelia's father—or Shakespeare. She was nothing if not direct, Urilda. She interspersed her words with irrepressible giggles that acknowledged her boldness unashamed before the world, and her very white, rather prominent teeth flashed with a pleasing effect of frankness across her sunburned face. She wore her hair brushed smoothly off her forehead, and her middy blouse showed a generous V of sunburned throat and an athletic forearm.

"Is he good looking?" she further wanted to know. "And how old is he? And how long is he going to stay?"

Which questions Ophelia answered at some length and according to the details so swiftly arranged in the summerhouse. She found, however, that one or two matters had been overlooked, and these she made out of the whole cloth of her imagination.

Thornwell Dare was not married. He was good looking, she supposed you'd say, and about thirty-five years old. He was from New Orleans—worked in a cotton office there. He might stay all summer. It depended upon how he liked the place. Yes, his

vacation did last that long. The cotton market was awfully inactive in summer; she had heard it said. He was coming on Friday, and would have the last room on the east side of the house.

"And Friday the thirteenth! Who ever called it an unlucky day?" cried Urilda.

It was Urilda who questioned and exclaimed, but Ophelia noticed, with a reluctant curling of her lip, that Mrs. Bidlowe ate her pudding with calculated slowness and that Miss Barton asked for a cup of coffee—a thing in which she seldom indulged.

They left the dining room at last, the subject far from exhausted, but Mrs. Perkins tarried, playing with her coffee spoon, gazing meditatively into the bottom of her cup. Ophelia, who had risen to help the colored maid of all work clear the table, came suddenly to her mother's side and laid one strong young arm across the narrow shoulders in an impulsive gesture of caress.

"Little mother, *mütterchen*," she said, in a voice that was unbelievably rich with feeling for one so cool and businesslike, "don't you worry! Now that I've come home again, I'm going to do the worrying for this family. It's a sin and a shame that I've let you do it all these years, big, grown-up somebody that I am! But it's my job now! All you've got to do is to fold your hands and knit. Though I don't suppose you could very well do both of those at once. Anyhow—you're not to worry! Any worrying there is to be done, I'll do!"

"Why, 'Phelia, honey, I wasn't worrying!" Her mother looked up from the coffee cup with a pleasantly abstracted air. "I was thinking how nice it would be if you and this young man should——"

Ophelia's arm stiffened in its clasp.

"Mother!"

"Well, dear, no one can ever tell. And I would like to have you find some fine man——"

"Mother! You know I have no use for men—never have had and never will!" She gave the reckless words the flavor of a boast. "Will you tell me what I'd want with 'some fine man?'"

"Why—just what every woman wants," said Mrs. Perkins, lifelong conviction lilting in her voice. "Some one to take care of you, some one to lean on when you need——"

"In the college faculty, there were as many women as there were men, and no one did any leaning on any one else that I could see. Out of the five women in this house, there are four who seem to get on fairly well. Perhaps I ought to say three. That silly Smith child will marry the first man who asks her, I haven't a doubt. And that when she's strong enough and ought to be clever enough to take care of herself! What does it amount to, mother—this marrying a man so you'll be taken care of? How many women do you know who've got married and then had not only themselves, but the man and a possible family of children to look out for after that? How many men have rendered women inefficient by keeping them drudging at home and then have died and left them helpless, to take care of themselves the best way that they could?" Her hand moved in swift and apologetic caress over her mother's shoulder as she said that, as if the shot might have gone home. "Why, mother, statistics show——"

"Phelia, honey," her mother interrupted her, vaguely distressed, "I don't believe you like young men!"

Ophelia sighed.

"If I could only make you see," she said, "my point of view!"

The maid clattered in with the dishes, and Ophelia turned to lift the bowl of yellow daisies from the center of the table and fold the cloth. A peal of summer thunder came in from the great outside, a faint, drifting murmur of sound from the pine trees on the beach.

Mrs. Perkins sat very still for several minutes, her hands folded in her lap. Ophelia had told her to do this—and refrain from worrying—but when she did, her thoughts turned inevitably to plans that clustered around Ophelia.

"Phelia, honey," she urged, gently persistent, "are you sure there wasn't some one at college? Some professor, say?"

"Sure, mother!" said Ophelia.

"The one who taught physics, now? You took such an interest in physics those last two years——"

"The man who taught physics," said Ophelia, "was a little man with pink rims round his eyes and a scrubby blond mustache. The girls called him 'Bunny.' I thought he looked more like a guinea pig myself."

"Dear, dear!" mourned Mrs. Perkins, a disappointed wrinkle between her wistful eyes. "Isn't it unbelievable, Ophelia, how impossible in appearance some men can be?"

Ophelia granted her that it was.

"As for this man who's coming here—this Thornwell Dare—the name almost put a bur upon her tongue—"there won't be any foolishness about him so far as I am concerned. I can't answer for Miss Barton—or Urilda, now." She was very careful of her laughter. "I think I'll have the grass in the front yard cut to-morrow."

When her mother rose from the table, Ophelia took her suddenly into her arms.

"Ah, *mütterchen*," she crooned, "we could live so happily ever afterward—just you and I, without any man!"

"Phelia! You're smothering me, honey! Times you're *so* like your father!" Mrs. Perkins said.

### CHAPTER III.

Ophelia had the grass in the front yard cut. She also had the shutters that were awry set straight, and she unearthed an ancient croquet set from

the tool box and was regarding it speculatively when Urilda came round the corner of the house and discovered her. It was characteristic of Urilda—that coming unexpectedly and boisterously around corners.

"Why don't you buy a tennis net?" she inquired now, with her usual frankness.

"Costs too much," said Ophelia, repaying her in kind. She did not add that, while one may venture the expenditure of a dollar or so in improving the appearance of a place, encouraged by the enlistment of the services of a summertime Romeo, one may not spend a possible five or ten.

"No old ones lying round, I suppose?"

"To the best of my knowledge, there's never been one on the place."

"I thought I saw a racket in your room?"

"College," said Ophelia tersely.

Urilda took her seat upon the steps, nibbling industriously at a grass blade. Her middie and white skirt were reasonably clean, this being the forenoon, but the unconcern with which she seated herself suggested that they might suffer before the day was done.

"You know," she said speculatively, "I'd just as leave invest in a tennis net."

"We couldn't for a minute allow such a thing!" said Ophelia with great dignity.

"Well, I like that! I'm going to have a tennis court when I get married, and if I want to invest in the net beforehand, there's no objection to my using the front yard, I suppose."

"The place is simply overgrown with rock-a-chaws."

"You could get a man to keep it clipped very close. I could show him how to mark it off with lime."

Ophelia weakened. A tennis court would undoubtedly be an asset to the place, and Urilda met every objection

she raised and promptly overruled it with the ingenuity of a spoiled child.

"You know," she said, "tennis is everything this year, and if this man is coming—and his stay depends on how well he is amused——"

Which was, of course, one way of looking at it. Only Ophelia had been looking at it exactly the other way. When she left Urilda and went slowly toward the house, she was curiously stimulated. Surely no grass grew under Ophelia's number fives.

Mrs. Perkins was lying down with a headache. Ophelia gave her a handkerchief wet with cologne to lay across her eyes and darkened her room.

"Have you arranged with Beatrice about the dinner?" Mrs. Perkins wanted to know. "And did the butcher boy bring the roast they promised for to-day? And when the grocer comes—I've been paying him a little every week, 'Phelia——"

"I know everything you want to say, and you're not to say it. Forget you ever wore yourself out with it—forget it if you can! Just lie still and meditate."

Ophelia went into the dining room to see that there were no flies lingering there, that the butter was actually on the ice, that the flowers on the table were quite fresh. Miss Barton, in search of a glass of water, followed her.

Miss Barton taught English in a high school somewhere in Georgia and had grown mid-Victorian while doing so. Jane Austen would have loved her; she was so precisely neat in all the little details of dress, such as belt buckles and ribbon ties; her hair, brown and curly, was brushed so carefully back from shell-pink ears; her brown eyes were so earnestly inquiring. She had the faintest of flushes in her cheeks, three freckles distinct upon her nose, and never any suspicion of powder.

"Busy as usual?" she greeted Ophelia with a smile.

Ophelia's answering smile was rather preoccupied.

"I was looking for you a little while ago," said Miss Barton. "I could not find you anywhere."

"Was there something you wanted?"

"Oh, nothing really. Only—the maid was straightening my room, and I wondered if you'd speak to her about being a little more careful—in the corners. There was quite a bit of dust in one of them yesterday."

Ophelia had heard the plaint before. She wondered suddenly how often her mother had heard it in the past eight years. Beatrice was no better and no worse than the majority of her dusky sisters. Dust in corners had no lure for them.

"Mrs. Bidlowe tells me," Miss Barton lingered, "that she is not so sure of leaving on Monday."

Ophelia gave her whole attention then. Mrs. Bidlowe's imminent departure had been one of the circumstances that had warranted her desperate venture.

"I thought she had to go. She said her conscience was hurting her—she had left her husband so long by himself——"

"She had a letter from him this morning, and he's getting along very nicely—or so I understood her to say. Of course he's missing her." Miss Barton made such swift reparation to Mrs. Bidlowe's absent spouse—and to Mrs. Bidlowe—that Ophelia turned aside to hide a smile. "I didn't mean that she had decided positively to stay."

"Last week," said Ophelia, "she spoke of going to Cedar Grove for a week or two. Some friends of hers were there."

"Oh, but he—they've left," said Miss Barton.

She closed her lips tightly upon her treacherous tongue, and as she passed Ophelia, she put a timidly beseeching hand upon her arm. If Ophelia repeated what she had said—Miss

Barton was always timid with Ophelia, who was so independent and daringly young, so purposeful, so capable of taking care of herself. Miss Barton clung to English literature and the high school as a murderer might cling to his cell. If she abandoned that—ventured into the outer world—what was there for her to do? To whom could she turn?

Her news lightened Ophelia's heart. When you are counting so many dimes to the butcher to-day, and so many more to the baker to-morrow, and to the candlestick maker the day after that, the loss of a boarder more or less is a serious matter.

As she went on to the room that was to be occupied by the young man, Ophelia assured herself that he must make himself attractive to Mrs. Bidlowe first of all. She trusted lightly that he would be able to judge the right degree of attraction that may with propriety exist between a Romeo and a married woman.

Urilda, she knew, would stay with them through the summer. Miss Barton might stay another week or two at the very least. There ought to be other answers to her advertisement by then.

Ophelia lifted a sheet of the newspaper she had brought to spread in the washstand drawer. It was an advertisement sheet, and halfway down the second column she read her own announcement: "Rooms and board on the beach. Terms reasonable."

In another column, the want ads this time, a more remarkable statement dared or puzzled the reader: "Wanted—a summertime Romeo."

That was the ad that had run for just one day and to which there had been one answer—Thornwell Dare. Ophelia smiled the smile of achievement as she regarded it. She had borrowed the phrase from a girl at school. It was much too frivolous a phrase to have sprung full-fledged from her own mind,



Urilda took her seat facing him and began a conversation in her usual daring style.

but as she read it now and thought of the answer received, she did a very frivolous thing—she permitted herself a daydream.

Looking out between the short muslin curtains at the window, she beheld the summertime Romeo disporting himself at tennis with Urilda; she saw him, oars over his shoulder, starting down the wharf with Mrs. Bidlowe—the unknown Mr. Bidlowe she threw to the lions of jealousy without a pang; she saw him come up from the beach with Miss Barton, the two of them in bathing suits and dripping wet. Her imagination rioted then! Feminine figures as numerous and as vicariously clad as those in a summer fashion magazine swirled and danced madly about the figure of one young man.

That was Ophelia's daydream, and of all the feminine figures, not one was her own.

#### CHAPTER IV.

On the day appointed, Thornwell Dare arrived. He stepped from the ten-thirty trolley as a bona-fide hero steps from the pages of a book, his suit case in one hand, a tennis racket and a guitar in the other, his camera slung under one arm in most approved style. And in spite of these numerous burdens, he carried his shoulders with the brave suggestion of a swing.

Ophelia, who waited somewhat nervously in the doorway, noted this. So did Urilda, who had been lying in the hammock reading and now lowered her book and very frankly stared.

"Well—here I am!" said Thornwell Dare. He set down his suit case upon the porch and swept his panama from his head with quite an air. There was the moisture of honest toil upon his brow. "Believe me, it is warm!" he said.

"If you'll come in——" suggested Ophelia, holding open the screen door. She was suddenly anxious to avoid Urilda's eyes.

Mrs. Perkins rose from her chair in the sitting room and extended a welcoming hand.

"I'm very glad to meet you, Mr. Dare. Ophelia told me you had come in answer to our advertisement for boarders. Your room's all ready for you. I hope you'll like it here. Ophelia will show you. She's my little housekeeper now."

Thornwell Dare answered her with one of his flashing smiles. He noticed in passing that Mrs. Perkins' head was on a level with her little housekeeper's shoulder, and his smile lingered.

"It must be very easy to like it here," he said.

The white cottage was, indeed, delightfully cool. The hall was furnished with wicker chairs and a center table bearing its share of the current magazines and a reading lamp. Well-filled bookcases lined the walls. A marble clock stood upon the mantel, erratically holding the hour at six, and over it hung a large engraving of Robert E. Lee. The open fireplace was filled with pine branches, and on the widest wall space there was an oil portrait of a gentleman, very straight and tall and commanding—Ophelia's father, beyond the shadow of a doubt. These were the obvious things in the room, and over them all there was a subtle air of gentility not to be ignored.

"Your room," said Ophelia, "is over here."

The young man followed her.

A short while later, having refreshed himself with soap and water, he reappeared in the doorway just in time to hear Mrs. Perkins say:

"But, 'Phelia, honey, if you'd only comb your hair a little lower over your ears—it's so much more becoming that

way—and wouldn't run off the way you do——"

There was a world of embarrassment in Ophelia's tone as she said:

"Here's Mr. Dare, mother!"

She moved toward the door, through which there came the persistent whine of tortured hammock hooks. It was thus that Urilda kept one aware of her presence: Miss Barton was in her room. The soft turning of her blinds as Thornwell Dare came up the steps had attested to that fact. But Mrs. Bidlowe was in the summerhouse, and it was Mrs. Bidlowe to whom Ophelia intended to introduce Thornwell Dare without loss of time. She put one hand on the door to open it and cast a significant glance over her shoulder.

"Charming place you have here," said Thornwell Dare to Mrs. Perkins and, provokingly oblivious of Ophelia's intention, he seated himself in one of the wicker rocking-chairs.

"We think so," said Mrs. Perkins. "Is this your first visit to the coast?"

Mr. Dare hesitated the fraction of a second before admitting that it was. He admitted with no hesitation at all, however, that the day was fair and that the summer, so far, had been very warm.

With a tiny furrow of impatience between her eyes, Ophelia came from the doorway and sat down. She did not relax gracefully, as Thornwell Dare had done. She was poised for flight. She had every intention of carrying him off to be introduced to Mrs. Bidlowe. She was merely humoring her mother by waiting.

"I see you have a kodak," she heard her mother say. "I've some very pretty views—some of them taken when Ophelia was a little thing."

Nothing would do but she must show Mr. Dare those views—he professed himself quite anxious to see them—and they were in the other room.

Ophelia looked after her as she went



in search of them and sighed. Mrs. Bidlowe had probably by this time left the summerhouse.

"There were some questions—some leading questions—I'd like to ask you," said Thornwell Dare.

Ophelia flung out a protesting hand. She was quite startled.

"You mustn't! Not here!" she cried.

Sound carried eerily through the white cottage on a summer day, and she fancied the creaking of the hammock hooks was considerably decreased. There had been, too, a faint click, which might have meant the opening of Miss Barton's door.

Thornwell Dare was, apparently, a reasonably intelligent young man. His eyes followed hers in their quick glancing from door to door, and he seemed to understand. Forthwith he rose and took his place beside her on the lounge and lowered his voice to a whisper. It was a discreet murmur. In fact, to say that it was an intimate whisper describes it very well.

"I'd like to know something about my victims, if you'll be so kind——"

"I—can't tell you now!" cried Ophelia.

"No one can possibly overhear——"

"Indeed they can!"

But Mr. Dare was most determined. He leaned very close to Ophelia, so close that the color flamed provokingly beneath her skin, and he must have been blind not to see the inky blackness of her lashes.

"Just tell me this: From the first—am I to—specialize?"

Before Ophelia could answer, indeed before she could draw away or control the color in her cheeks, Mrs. Perkins came back into the room.

"I have them——" she said, and then she stopped so suddenly that it was evident she had seen all there was to see.

Ophelia's lips parted in quick protest, indignant denial. But denial of what? Thornwell Dare assumed an innocent

and interested expression that inflamed conjecture. He rose with suspicious alacrity and took the pictures from Mrs. Perkins' hand and admired them—too indiscriminately. By the very ingratiating quality of his smile, he insinuated that there *had* been something—well, at least unusual—in his behavior toward Ophelia.

Mrs. Perkins was not proof against that smile. There was an answering flicker of delighted conjecture in her own that maddened Ophelia so that she rose, prepared without more ado to take Mr. Dare to the summerhouse and Mrs. Bidlowe.

At which point Urilda Smith appeared in the doorway, stifling a yawn.

"Have I left my knitting bag in here?" she asked.

Urilda had no knitting bag. Ophelia knew it, and Mrs. Perkins thought she knew it, but while they hesitated in their answers, Urilda sat down.

So it was Urilda whom Mr. Dare met first of the boarders. She took her seat facing him and began a conversation in her usual dashing style. Mrs. Perkins' snapshots were forgotten; Ophelia yielded place with what grace she could muster. Sport held Urilda's attention, and she proceeded to question Mr. Dare as to his interest in the same. Needless to say, she found him responsive, delightfully so. The sports she liked best were Mr. Dare's delight.

Swimming? Well, of course there wasn't much chance for swimming along the coast—unless you had a boat and could go far out. There were catboats for the renting. Did Mr. Dare know how to sail? And riding? Well, of course good horses were rather hard to get, but—was he a good hiker? He most assuredly was! Rowing? He knew something of that. Tennis? Didn't Mr. Dare adore tennis? Beyond the shadow of a doubt, he did!

"This court has been simply eaten up with rock-a-chaws!" Urilda informed

him. "But we're getting it into shape, and the new net ought to be here Monday."

Her delighted giggle was clearly irrepressible. Mr. Dare regarded her cordially, but the glance he shot at Ophelia held an appreciative twinkle. Ophelia avoided further glances by leaving the room at a convenient opportunity.

Urilda looked after her and giggled again.

"Ophelia is the sweetest thing!" she said. Which may—or may not—have had to do with Ophelia's leaving the room.

Mrs. Perkins sat rocking and smiling rather vaguely at Urilda. For all the attention Urilda paid her, she might have been the thinnest air.

"I certainly am glad you've come!" said Urilda to Thornwell Dare. "You've no idea of the scarcity of men—the deadliness of the place! I've an idea you're going to have a pretty busy time!"

The same idea, no doubt, occurred to Mr. Dare. He took Urilda in hand without loss of further time, but when the noon dinner was announced, he wiped a heated brow.

In the dining room, Miss Barton was properly introduced.

Mrs. Bidlowe was late in coming in and made, therefore, an effective entrance. Mr. Dare was obliged to rise, his soup half consumed, to meet the lady, and since her chair was next to his, to seat her in her place.

By all the art she knew of nods and glances—and it was to her an unpracticed art—Ophelia endeavored to suggest to Mr. Dare that this was where he must, as he himself had expressed it, specialize. She was hampered somewhat in her efforts by the fear that Urilda or Miss Barton might see and understand, and she consequently achieved a succession of animated nods and glances that might have done credit

to one more amorously inclined. After a particularly eloquent nod, she looked across the table to find her mother regarding her with delighted incredulity.

It was balm to her wounded spirit to see that Mr. Dare evidently understood and was devoting himself to Mrs. Bidlowe. But across the table Urilda listened shamelessly to every word he said, and Miss Barton, while she reserved her glances as a lady should, blushed when she accidentally caught the masculine eye.

Evidently, Ophelia concluded, it would be wise to have a confidential talk with Thornwell Dare at the earliest opportunity—though not in the sitting room, as he had suggested, where the very walls had ears. They might speak unreservedly in the kitchen, perhaps, if she went there on a message to Beatrice—and he followed.

"Ophelia, honey," said Mrs. Perkins, when the others had all left the room, "Mr. Dare does seem to be a very nice young man. He has such lovely manners. Some men would be awkward with so many ladies round. I never saw a man more at his ease. If I were a girl now——"

She smiled archly at Ophelia, but Ophelia laughed, and her laughter had a genuine, light-hearted ring.

"Urilda evidently agrees with you, mother. I think perhaps Miss Barton regards him in that light, too."

## CHAPTER V.

It was not in the kitchen that Ophelia held her confidential conversation with Thornwell Dare that day. Beatrice had to scrub the kitchen, and Ophelia had an errand in the village, so when the heat had sent two of the ladies to their rooms and the third to her favorite hammock, Ophelia pinned on her imitation panama and boarded the trolley, and on Main Street, right in front of the drug store, she encountered Thorn-



well Dare. He had come in to see about his trunk, he said, and he guided Ophelia's steps into the drug store and toward a small table in the rear.

"What shall it be?" he asked, and smiled broadly when she ordered a maple-pecan sundae. It sounded like such a frivolous, schoolgirl confection, and it was decidedly interesting to find the cool and composed Ophelia evidently addicted to it.

"This is the very opportunity I've been looking for," said Mr. Dare. "I thought—that is, I got the idea at noon—that you were calling my attention to the lady on my left. Was I right?"

Ophelia, inadvertently occupied with a luscious mouthful, could only nod.

"H'm-m-m! Married lady, isn't she? Friend husband not liable to mind? I wouldn't have you think me a timid soul, but merely cautious. In the pictures, you know, friend husband is so frequently a disturbing element. And married ladies are so apt to misconstrue the mildest sentiment, poor, starved souls!"

"I'm not asking you," said Ophelia a trifle stiffly, "to do any thing—improper." She sought for the word some seconds before she found it, and no sooner was it pronounced than she knew it was not what she had meant.

"Of course not! I understood that. But this lady lives in—Alexandria, you say? At least a day off. I could get a running start if need be."

"I'm afraid," said Ophelia, still more stiffly and with the red high in her cheeks, "that you do *not* understand." She had finished her maple-pecan sundae by that time, and she looked as if she deeply regretted the fact—as if she would repudiate the attentions of a man who found it so impossible to understand.

"I was only joking—and in very bad taste at that," Mr. Dare assured her. "We'll be serious now."

"I've never been anything else," said

Ophelia, and was somehow conscious of sounding like a prude.

Mr. Dare looked incredulous and made a commiserating little sound slightly tinged with laughter. Very wisely he refrained from further comment upon such a statement.

"Could you give me some hints as to the lady's likes and dislikes?" he hastened to ask. "Just to save time that may prove valuable?"

"She reads all of the six best sellers," Ophelia told him, "and the trashy magazines. She's president of the Ladies' Bridge Club in her town and wears a ridiculous number of diamonds—prides herself on being a clinging vine, but thinks she could rival Mary Pickford or Theda Bara, whichever and whenever she cared to try. She's very fond of candy." Ophelia's gaze fixed itself upon the well-filled candy stand in the front part of the store. "Of course you'll have to furnish your own candy," she said.

Mr. Dare conceded the point.

"Well—I suppose I might. Tell me about the little school-teacher."

"There's something more interesting to be told about her. She supports herself by her teaching and has a secret passion for the works of Strindberg and Sudermann and D'Annunzio—that lot. You'd be more likely to accuse her of Tennyson and Shelley—Rossetti, perhaps—don't you think? She's never had any one attentive to her before."

"I see!" said Mr. Dare, nodding over the significant word.

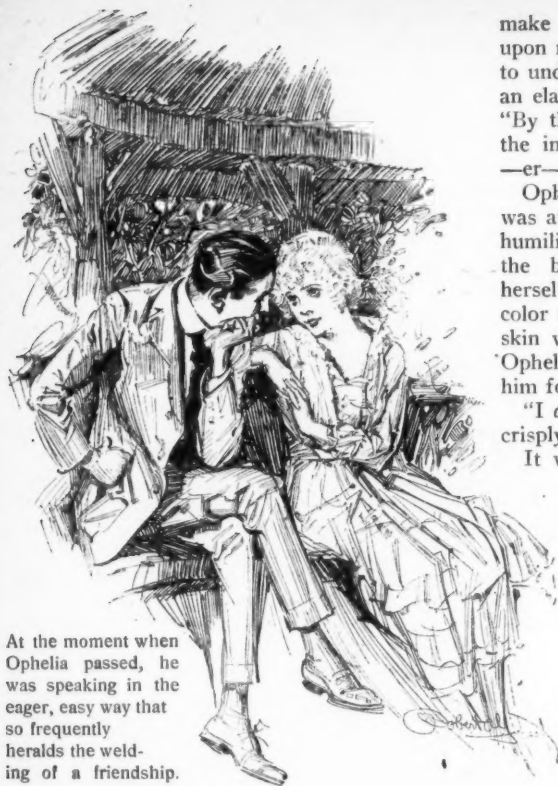
"As for Urilda—Miss Smith——"

He raised a protesting hand.

"Urilda is no longer Miss Smith to me. You forget that I talked to her for quite a while this morning. She is, I take it, an example of our artless modern art. A charming child! A bit—impetuous, perhaps——"

"Her mother says 'vivacious.'"

"Is that the word? She giggles quite a lot."



At the moment when Ophelia passed, he was speaking in the eager, easy way that so frequently heralds the welding of a friendship.

"That's her vivacity."

"So? Well, now we have them"—he held up three fingers—"the married lady, the spinster, and the child. Does it strike you that they're three decidedly dangerous subjects?"

A sudden sickening bitterness swept over Ophelia. Her plan had already cost her a modest expenditure in dollars and cents that would be sorely felt if the summertime Romeo deserted now. She had a nightmare vision of Urilda and her tennis net.

"If you're—afraid—" she began coldly.

"I'm a gentleman of my word," said Thornwell Dare. "I only wanted to

make sure that if I come back upon my shield, there'll be one to understand!" He made her an elaborate bow as they rose. "By the way," he said, "I get the impression that you don't—er—care for men."

Ophelia's trick of blushing was at once a gratifying and a humiliating thing, gratifying to the beholder, humiliating to herself. Mr. Dare saw the color rise under her clear olive skin with an appreciative eye. Ophelia told herself she hated him for it.

"I don't like them," she said crisply.

It was not the most cordial thing to say to the gentleman who was, at the moment, paying your ice-cream check, and she felt unpleasantly constrained until their ways parted on the sidewalk in front of the store. She went on then to the grocery, where she found that the price of cornmeal and sugar had risen several cents overnight,

and to the dry-goods store, where dish towels were selling at just twice the price for which she had last bought them. As the change in her little black silk bag dwindled, she became more firmly convinced that the world was sadly out of joint.

It was somewhat heartening when she returned home, in another hour or so, to find Mrs. Bidlowe and a companion in the summerhouse. The honeysuckle was not so thickly grown that they were hidden from the public view of the shell road. Mrs. Bidlowe's blue organdie, with its sprawling pattern of pink roses, made a beautiful blur of color against the green, and the rays of

a declining sun struck kindly on the high-piled masses of her pale-gold hair. A pretty picture she and Mr. Dare presented.

For it was Mr. Dare, his hat off, his dark, close-cropped head turned to meet the quickening breeze, who faced her. At the moment when Ophelia passed, he was speaking in the eager, easy way that so frequently heralds the welding of a friendship.

Ophelia had to ring the supper bell three times before they heard it. They came in then with the inevitable hint of embarrassment. Mr. Dare seated the lady with quite the air of a cavalier and was markedly attentive in seeing that she was served.

Very obviously he was, as Urilda might have said, getting into his stride. When Urilda accused him of having run away that afternoon, he challenged her to a game of tennis as soon as the new net should arrive. He watched his opportunity, and the first time that Miss Barton raised her eyes to his, he smiled at her with a suggestion of silent congeniality.

There was a moment of tense excitement during that meal. Mrs. Bidlowe caused it.

"I've been wanting to ask you, Mr. Dare," she said, "where you are from. I've such a good friend—Jimmy Dare. Perhaps——"

He shook his head.

"Don't believe I know him. My home's in Georgia. Rome."

"Why, that's where this man lived! I haven't seen him for an age. He used to come to see me before I was married."

"Did I say Rome? By Jove, that was foolish of me! I meant Opelika," said Mr. Dare, mixing his geographical facts a bit. "I worked in Rome for several years."

"Opelika?" cried Miss Barton, unexpectedly and inopportunely responding to that casual smile. "That's not far

from where I live. Columbus, Georgia, is my home. But I've some very dear friends in Opelika—the Goodwin girls."

Mr. Dare regretted, somewhat hastily, that he didn't know the Goodwin girls.

"To tell the truth," he said—and Ophelia looked at him in consternation, wondering if he remembered that he had told her to say he was from New Orleans—"I've been away from home for so many years. Hail from there, you know, but I went to school in New Orleans—finished at Tulane. I've been living in New Orleans recently."

There was a decided tinge of admiration in Ophelia's breath of relief, and she scolded herself for the flashing thought that a man must be skilled in deception to extricate himself so skillfully from a trying situation. However, it was just as well. He would probably have need to extricate himself many times during the summer if he played her game with any measure of success.

The nightly task of seeing that the dining room was put to rights after the meal required an hour more or less. When she finally turned the light out and went into the hall, she found her mother knitting there and Miss Barton beside the reading lamp with a thin, scholarly-looking volume in her hands.

Ophelia went to the door with some idea of enjoying herself in the hammock and the cool silences of the night. But the night on the porch was not silent. Mr. Dare and Mrs. Bidlowe were sitting on the steps. Ophelia was hastily retreating when she saw that Urilda was also sitting on the steps and giggling across the conversation.

Unhesitatingly she opened the door and stepped out.

"Urilda, would you mind? I have to run over to Mrs. Brooks' to speak to her about something, and mother doesn't like to have me go alone. Will you come?"

If Mr. Dare moved to offer his escort no one was aware of the fact. It was very dark on the steps. But Urilda, to do her justice, came readily enough.

"So Mrs. Bidlowe isn't going home as soon as she had planned?" she said to Ophelia, before they were well out of earshot.

"Did she say so?"

"Just told Mr. Dare she might be here another month—that her husband wouldn't hear of her coming home—was the most unselfish man——"

Urilda giggled as if there were something funny in this, but Ophelia didn't join her. Under cover of the darkness, however, she treated herself to a relieved smile. Mrs. Bidlowe's decision was the first fruit of her wild plan.

#### CHAPTER VI.

It was the first week in July when Thornwell Dare came to the white cottage under the oak—a July of hot blue skies, offset by breezes that blew from the sound by day and night. The sheltering oak gave a mercy of shade to those in the cottage, and morning and evening knew a deceptive, delicious coolness before the sun was high and after it was set. The tides were running well that month, and every morning, about ten o'clock, Urilda and Miss Barton and Mrs. Bidlowe—attended by Mr. Dare—went down the wharf for the daily swim. There was tennis in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon; there was rowing; there were bonfires on the beach at night; there were trolley rides, with ice cream and a picture show as an objective—all of this possible because, in the white cottage, there was a *man*!

When Ophelia thought of the lagging days before he had come, she sighed with intense relief. The world was growing as rosy to Ophelia as the reflection of one of the sunsets that bathed the scenes of the little play she was staging. Mrs. Bidlowe had officially

announced her intention of staying another month—the salt air seemed to be doing her so much good, she said—and there had been two answers to the advertisement for boarders.

It was a quietly jubilant Ophelia who rose each morning at six o'clock and ran down to the beach for her swim. The water was highest then and very cold. She had her plunge and was back at the house before the others were even out of bed and, in fresh white shirt waist and skirt, she served their cereal and fruit and poured their coffee with willing hands.

She smiled quite cordially upon Thornwell Dare when he appeared one morning prepared to join her in the early swim, but she shook her head.

"You must wait for the others," she said. "The swim is one of the big events of the day. Didn't I hear that you were teaching Miss Barton to float, and Mrs. Bidlowe to swim, and Urilda to dive? By the way, you want to be mighty careful about that last. The water's so shallow around here that it's dangerous. She'll break her neck."

"Why mayn't I come in now and later, too, if I feel like it? There's no law——"

"Go away!" laughed Ophelia. "You're spoiling my fun." And she turned her back quite frankly and slipped down into the water until only her dark head in its scarlet cap and one gleaming, rounded arm, flashing up and over rhythmically, were visible.

She looked back over her shoulder after a while and saw him retreating up the wharf—a rather disconsolate figure. Strangely enough, she smiled in remembering that figure as she came out of the water and ran lightly across the shell road and up the walk to the cottage.

"God's in His heaven,  
All's right with the world!"

she caroled, assured of the success of her plan.

Her mother stilled that song.

"Phelia, honey," she said that day, "does it seem to you that Mrs. Bidlowe is—too frequently—with Mr. Dare? I hope it's just my imagination, but it does seem to me——"

"Nonsense, *mütterchen!*" laughed Ophelia, but the light of quick defense leaped in her eyes.

"You think it is just my imagination, then? Well, I hope so, I'm sure. But it does seem to me he's with her more than either of the other two. She's forever and always talking about him. Yesterday I'm sure he was just about to sit beside you when she called him. And you know, my dear, when a young married woman's away from her husband—I don't think it's right! I certainly don't!"

"Scandal, mother! And gossip!"

"Not at all! I wouldn't say anything for the world. But when a young man is so attractive—and she is inclined to be flirtatious, my dear. Last night, after I had gone to bed, I got up again to turn my shutter to let in a little more breeze, and the two of them were standing by the railing, and I'm not sure—but it looked very much as if he were holding her hand."

"Are you sure it was Mrs. Bidlowe?" laughed Ophelia, but in her own ears the laughter flatted. "Urilda, now——"

"Urilda!" Mrs. Perkins sniffed. "I hope I haven't reached my time of life without learning something! Urilda would have been holding his hand, Ophelia; I never saw a girl lose her head about a man the way that one does. I've wanted to speak to her. You know how responsible I feel, with her father and mother not here. And what do we know about this Mr. Dare? He is perfectly charming—but you can never tell. They say even criminals can be that!"

Ophelia laughed with an abandon she was far from feeling, and when Mr. Dare strolled into the dining room just

before dinner, she took advantage of the opportunity to speak to him. The three ladies were drying their hair, he reported. The waves had been unusually high that morning, and they had got very wet.

"My mother was speaking of you and Mrs. Bidlowe a few minutes ago," said Ophelia. She moved around the table as she spoke, portioning out knives and forks and spoons.

Mr. Dare passed with a glass of water halfway to his lips and a gleam of modest pleasure in his eye.

"I fancy I'm making rather a neat job of that."

"I'm not so sure that you are."

"I beg your pardon?" There was no doubting his surprise.

"I'm not at all sure that you're making a neat job of it. If it's too obvious, you see——"

"But the lady in question is pleased." He set the glass of water down with a puzzled and aggrieved air and looked at Ophelia, demanding justice.

"She won't be pleased if she's talked about."

"No more will she if she isn't talked to. What would you advise?"

Ophelia considered the question dubiously a moment.

"I don't know," she said at last, almost crossly. "Isn't it your part to bother about such things? You ought to know how to be nice enough without being—too nice."

She was entirely serious, but there was a twinkle in Thornwell Dare's eyes that he took care she should not see.

"It's my one fault—being too nice," he dared with exaggerated meekness.

But he faltered before the genuine candor in Ophelia's gaze. It was such impersonal candor—quite refreshing after the warmth of Urilda's friendliness, Mrs. Bidlowe's emotions, and Miss Barton's sentiment.

"Don't you think it might be a good thing if we had regular consultations,

you and I?" he suggested guilefully. "Say—every other day? You can watch my progress and offer suggestions. It's a little bit hard for me to get the right perspective—as you might say, Running a three-ring circus is a complicated business."

"I have entirely too much to do. There wouldn't be time——"

"Well, of course—if you put it that way. But you can see for yourself the danger. Now, I was blissfully unconscious that I was overdoing it with this lady."

Ophelia reconsidered.

"It would be very hard to find a place where we wouldn't be overheard."

"Come rowing. If we get a mile or so out in the sound——"

"Miss 'Phelia," said Beatrice, from the doorway leading to the kitchen, "is you goner see is dis graby seasoned right?"

Mr. Dare lingered hopefully in the dining room, finding such a termination to the conversation entirely unsatisfactory, but Ophelia did not reappear. Appetizing odors drifted out from the kitchen, and he heard her directing the details of the dinner.

A trifle piqued, he went out to the porch, where Urilda was drying her hair. It was not long hair, because Urilda had bobbed it the year before—all the girls were doing it then—and it was a somewhat nondescript brown with broad, blond, sunburned streaks that were rather startling until one became used to them. But the most decided thing about it was its straightness.

"I'm thinking of cutting it again," she told him, as he took an uncomfortable seat upon the railing.

"Going to give me a curl when you do?"

"This long one." She held a lock away from her forehead with an inviting air until he made a show of reaching for his pocketknife, when she flung

it back in safety from across her eyes. "The water was pretty salt this morning. I must have swallowed a gallon or two that time you ducked me. You certainly are strong. Mrs. Bidlowe's having a sweet time with her hair. The salt makes it awfully sticky, and she has such a lot, it's a day's work to give it a good rinsing. She'll never be ready in time for dinner. Aren't you nearly starved? In another fifteen minutes, I'll be able to eat this house."

"When are you going to give me another set of tennis?" he asked, plunging into the stream.

"Whenever Mrs. Bidlowe will let you play," giggled Urilda. "To-morrow morning? This afternoon?"

They played that afternoon, while Mrs. Bidlowe was still struggling with her hair and Miss Barton was writing letters—a trifle incoherently, it must be allowed, interrupted frequently by the memory that Mr. Dare had asked her if she'd care to see a copy of Celtic verse which he had with him; he'd show it to her in the morning, if she did.

And that night, with the pale-gold sickle of the new moon swinging high against the blue-black velvet of the sky, with machines, like padded monsters, slipping past on the shell road, their white searchlights cleaving the way, Mr. Dare brought forth his guitar and entered into competition with the locusts. He had a voice of limited power, but he used it to chant instead of to sing, accompanying himself with skillful chords so that the effect was altogether pleasing. Old plantation songs, remnants of comic opera, a glee-club jingle or two—it was a very creditable performance. When he sang "Ashore," he turned the fraction of an inch toward Mrs. Bidlowe; there was an old Scotch ballad with tender references to Jean—and Jean was Miss Barton's name; and "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden" brought delighted giggles from Urilda.

Ophelia sat in the hammock and



watched the group on the steps. She was very tired. The day had been more than usually trying. There had been so much to do, and her satisfaction with her summertime Romeo had been sadly jarred. Her thoughts were still revolving around grocery lists and menus, funds disbursed wisely and well, a dusky admirer of Beatrice's who was too frequently in evidence.

It was eleven o'clock when Urilda woke her with a firm grip upon the arm. "Mercy me! If you haven't been asleep, Ophelia! We're all going to bed, and there isn't a bit of ice water in the cooler."

Mrs. Bidlowe had already disappeared. Miss Barton was standing by the table in the hall, waiting for ice water, too. Mr. Dare was closing the shutters in the dining room. Ophelia looked at him dazedly, her eyes still filmed with sleep.

"You needn't bother. I'll do that," she said, but she was distinctly conscious of a feeling of relief that it was already done. She broke a piece of ice. Urilda was holding the cover of the cooler for her.

"Good practice for any man," said Urilda—and giggled.

Ophelia wondered why.

## CHAPTER VII.

In the third week of July, Miss Barton went away. She went with evident reluctance, and the night before she left she sat down on the pier with Thornwell Dare until ten o'clock. Whether they discussed Celtic poetry or D'Annunzio was not generally known. The moon was nearing the full.

"Dear Miss Perkins—Ophelia," she said in leaving, "I can never tell you what this summer in your home has meant to me."

"We shall be glad to see you again," said Ophelia, her mind on business bent.

"It could never be the same!" sighed Miss Barton.

Thornwell Dare was waiting to take her to the train, and her brown eyes were limpid with emotion. Ophelia had the grace to blush. But when the trolley had borne the two away, she went to Miss Barton's room, armed with the necessary implements for a thorough cleaning up. Two ladies were due on the afternoon train from New Orleans, and Ophelia had work to do.

She was down on the wharf crabbing, when Mr. Dare returned, and he sought her there.

"I have to report," he said, "that I have enthusiastically speeded the parting guest."

"She caught her train?"

"We waited one-half hour in the station. She said she was always so nervous about missing a train that she liked to get there ahead of time."

Ophelia used her scoop net with discretion, to land a big, rusty-backed crab. His advent into her basket was the signal for a fury of hissing and spitting and clashing of crustacean claws. Mr. Dare carefully avoided the proximity of the basket.

"Deviled crabs?" he inquired with some interest.

"Gumbo," said Ophelia laconically.

She was tying a large piece of raw meat onto a line and she did it determinedly, but with obvious distaste for the business. There was another piece of business before her for which she had an almost equal distaste, however, and when the line with its burden had slipped down into the water, she gave that her attention.

"I've been wanting to say to you"—she went about it very coolly, but a certain nervousness evidenced itself in the careful spacing of her words—"that there is—no necessity—for the sort of thing that happened last night."

"Last night?" No one could look more innocently inquiring than Mr. Dare.

"On the beach—you held my hand."

She scorned quibbling, but the flush that mortified her so and equally delighted Mr. Dare crept slowly from brow to chin. It was as if there were two Ophelias—one sharing the instincts and emotions all girls are heir to, the other scientific, college-bred, scorning all feminine devices.

"Oh—that? You'll have to forgive me. I didn't mean a thing. That is, you see, I get so in the habit of these little attentions to any girl who happens to be around. It all goes with my part. Stage directions—business of holding hands—business of soulful glances—— It's all a part of the char-

acter—the summertime Romeo. I practice continually. Upon my word, I'm sorry about last night—that is—if you didn't like it."

There was a breath-taking hint of audacity in the last words. They suggested that it was not credible that Ophelia had not liked it. The beach had been a most romantic spot; there had been the flickering bonfire, the shelter of a gray, half-buried wreck upon the sand, the clear, star-glinting sky above their heads and at their feet the murmur of little lapping waves, far out the lure of beckoning channel lights. It had been a time and a place when any girl must look kindly upon the Romeo who holds her hand, and Thornwell Dare challenged Ophelia to deny the fact.

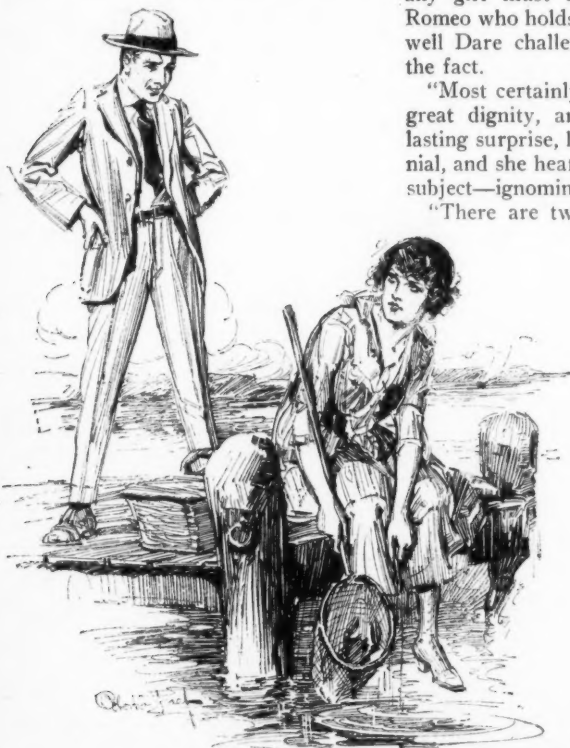
"Most certainly——" she began with great dignity, and then, to her everlasting surprise, her lips refused the denial, and she heard herself changing the subject—ignominiously in retreat.

"There are two ladies coming from the city this afternoon."

Without protest, he followed her lead, but he managed, subtly, to convey the impression that he was biding his time.

"Age, color, and condition — if I may make so bold?"

"More school-teachers, I think. They spoke of staying a possible two weeks. That seems to be as much as a school-teacher can save out of her salary these days."



"I have to report," he said, "that I have enthusiastically speeded the parting guest."



"Beastly life!" said Mr. Dare, with a world of feeling in his tone.

"Infinitely preferable to some other things."

"Have you ever taught?"

"Not yet. I begin this fall."

He shook his head commiseratingly.

"Poor child! Poor, deluded child! When there's probably some nice young man——"

"I have to earn a living and take care of mother," said Ophelia, ignoring the last part of that speech, "and taking boarders is *not* my idea——"

"Amen! But some nice young man now——"

He repeated the suggestion rashly, and Ophelia abandoned her lines and faced him, and the world, with deliberate fierceness. For once and all, she wanted her ideas upon the subject understood.

"Thank goodness the day has come," she said, "when matrimony is no longer a girl's only respectable means of livelihood!"

"Oh, but some people still regard it—favorably," suggested Mr. Dare.

There were two large crabs visible through the translucent green of the water, attacking the meat on one of Ophelia's lines. She devoted the next three minutes to them.

"Now that Miss Barton has gone," she said, at the expiration of that time, "it will be a question of Urilda and Mrs. Bidlowe and these other ladies."

"Do you think, since you spoke about Mrs. Bidlowe, that I show improvement in my methods?"

"I haven't any fault to find," said Ophelia slowly. "I have really thought it would be hard to find any one more suited to the position."

"Thank you! For myself and for my company, I thank you!"

"You seem to know—intuitively—what to say to them—the sort of attention that each one likes. I've wondered," said Ophelia, frankly curious,

"whether that—just comes to you? Or have you had a great deal of practice?"

Confusion threatened to overcome Mr. Dare, but he recovered himself quickly.

"Native genius," he said, with a wave of one hand to dismiss the subject. "Now, in the case of Mrs. Bidlowe, she reproached me delicately with growing rather cold—wanted to know whether it was because of anything she had done. I told her that it was nothing that could be remedied. She said I distressed her, and what *could* it be? I got up—we were in the summerhouse—and walked away—three feet away. I folded my arms and clenched my teeth—stern-repression stuff—he was evidently enjoying himself in retrospect—and she entreated me to *say* what it was. Friendships such as ours were precious things, not to be lightly cast aside or lost. I laughed at that, signifying that the friendship had been lost to me the day that it began, and when she asked me, with pretty defiance, what I meant by *that*, I told her—to ask her husband!"

"When was all this?" demanded Ophelia.

She was sure that Mr. Dare was exaggerating the affair. It sounded overemotional to her. He had known Mrs. Bidlowe only a few weeks.

"Three evenings ago. I thought you might have noticed, since then, that she regards me with a startled question in her eye whenever I cross the room toward her. She seems to suspect me of an intention to kidnap her and carry her off by her beautiful blond hair."

"I had noticed," said Ophelia slowly, "that she's been more particular about getting her letters off to her husband by a certain train."

"There it is! That's her conscience prodding her. And she wants to prove an alibi in conjugal devotion if ever I accuse her of having blighted my young life. Though I was very careful to tell

her that knowing her had meant so much to me."

"Suggesting?"

"Suggestions are dangerous things. I was thinking of three square meals a day and life in the white cottage."

Ophelia gathered up her lines and made ready to depart. There was an inflection in Mr. Dare's voice that she didn't clearly recognize and yet mistrusted.

"You'll be short one meal unless I get these up to the house," she hastened to say, in her most practical way.

"Just six! That isn't going to be enough. I'm very hungry to-day."

"More than enough for gumbo. Beatrice can take two crabs and a piece of ham—a little okra—and make a gumbo fit for a king. Only, I don't suppose there ever was a king who indulged in gumbo."

"His loss, then. Here! I'm going to carry that!"

Against her protests, he took possession of the basket and the net, and she was conscious, when he did it, of disproportionate relief. They walked up the wharf in silence, the boards echoing beneath their feet, the near-noon sun dazzling them with the glare from water and beach and shell road. And yet it was very pleasant companionship. There was no foolishness about this, Ophelia thought, as there was about a man's holding your hand.

"Do you think," she asked suddenly, "that you'll last the summer out?"

The gate clicked to behind them as she said it, the oak cast its wealth of shade, and she took off her wide straw hat and fanned herself with it idly.

"You speak as if I were scheduled for a quick demise. Barring accidents, I think I'll last. But I will appreciate time off this afternoon."

He followed her with his burden to the kitchen door.

Mrs. Perkins was standing in the

doorway, talking to a tall, thin countryman who spat carefully between words—his words were few—and who carried himself with awkward authority.

"Phelia, honey," Mrs. Perkins cried, "Mr. Goodyear's been telling me the most awful thing about a man he's looking for—a sort of bluebeard who's hiding in this part of the country. He was saying, when you and Mr. Dare came up—"

But when Ophelia turned to include Mr. Dare in this bit of news, he had disappeared. He explained afterward that he hadn't wanted to intrude and that he was genuinely disappointed not to have met the sheriff.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Ophelia and her mother were sitting in the hall when Mr. Dare went out that afternoon. Urilda had gone over to Cedar Grove, and Mrs. Bidlowe was lying down.

"Phelia, honey," said Mrs. Perkins, as the alert masculine figure swung aboard the trolley, "what do you make of that young man?"

Ophelia paused in her darning, the needle held at a dangerous angle.

"Make of him?" she echoed.

Mrs. Perkins nodded a wise little gray head.

"Who is he? Where does he come from? Why is he staying here?" Her voice husked to the thread of a whisper.

"Why, mother, what on earth do you mean?"

"That," said Mrs. Perkins meditatively to herself, "is the worst of taking boarders. You never can tell just who you're harboring in your home. I've been thinking how dangerous it is ever since Mr. Goodyear was here. He warned me about any suspicious characters who might be hanging around, and the more I think of Mr. Dare—"

"You'd hardly say that Mr. Dare was 'hanging around' when he boards here," suggested Ophelia.

"Yes, I know. And he says he lives in New Orleans. But how do we know? And didn't you notice that when Mrs. Bidlowe asked him one day about his home, he got all mixed up in what he had to say? He didn't seem to know. And if you'll notice, he hasn't gotten a piece of mail since he's been here. You must admit there's something queer in that!"

"He may get it in the general delivery. What difference does it make to us whether he gets any at all?"

"No real difference, 'Phelia, honey. But I take such an interest in everything and every one now that you've shouldered the responsibility of the house. My brain seems to be more active than it used to be. I want to know all about everybody. And I've wondered so about this young man."

"He seems to be a gentleman," said Ophelia carefully.

"Seems to be, certainly—and a perfectly charming man. That's what interested me first of all. Why should a young gentleman who is perfectly all right want to spend his summer in a house full of women this way? It isn't natural."

"I'm sure he's been very—nice."

"Too nice. I don't like all of this shilly-shallying with first one and then another. First it was Mrs. Bidlowe. Then I'm positive he made that poor Miss Barton care for him. And Urilda! Urilda is simply running wild! You know how responsible I feel, when her father and mother are off yonder in that heathenish place. Besides—there have been times when, from the way he's looked at you, I've been sure that if you'd only give him a chance——"

"Did I tell you," asked Ophelia, "that I'd heard from the college about that position in Vicksburg? I'll have to stand examinations in the fall."

But Mrs. Perkins was not to be diverted.

"You needn't try to change the sub-

ject, Ophelia. I can't for the life of me see why you should. I'm trying to tell you that Mr. Goodyear says we can't be too careful this summer whom we take in. This young man he was speaking of is hiding along the coast somewhere—palming himself off as respectable——"

"What was it he had done?"

"Murdered his wife. And she was the fourth one."

"The fourth one he'd murdered, mother!"

"No! The fourth one he'd married. He'd just gone off and left the others, but he murdered this one, and the police think it ought to be stopped."

"Of course. But what has all this to do with Mr. Dare?"

"You mean to say you don't see? Mr. Goodyear told me this morning that the man they're looking for is quite nice looking and well mannered, and you know we've all commented on how Mr. Dare gets on with women. And he simply walked in here—from goodness knows where. Just think of those poor wives!"

She argued the case quite earnestly, a spot of color glowing in each faded cheek, but Ophelia shook her head above her darning and laughed.

"*Mütterchen, mütterchen!*" she cried. "You've been reading Mrs. Bidlowe's trashy magazines! If you have no more presentable evidence than that——"

Whereupon Mrs. Perkins rose with great dignity and took her knitting into her own room. With the door closed, she tiptoed over to the bed and lifted the pillow, to make sure that Ophelia had not discovered and removed the gaudy-backed monthly hidden there.

Ophelia's darning halted somewhat in the sitting room. She had answered her mother laughingly, but now a vague uneasiness possessed her soul. After all was said and done, she didn't know who Thornwell Dare was, and it was unusual that he hadn't received any mail

—and she *did* know that the name he used was not his own.

But the suggestion that he had murdered a trusting wife seemed altogether absurd. For no definable reason, Ophelia was quite sure that he was not a married man at all. As for being a criminal! She was sure that—well, that criminals did not have such frank blue eyes, such appealing smiles. He was only a professional flirt. There were dozens such, though she had never met one before. It was a type of which she had always been superlatively scornful, but it occurred to her quite suddenly that Thornwell Dare had broken her barriers down while she had not even been aware of the process. She was not sure that she disliked him; his smile lingered pleasantly in her mind—and the agreeable way in which he appropriated burdens and carried them lightly.

It was inevitable that Ophelia should remember the twinkle in his eye—a certain quizzical trick of the eyebrows. He had a gesture of the hands, a distinctive thing that recurred to her unexpectedly. Urilda was apt to exclaim frequently over the breadth of his shoulders and their athletic swing.

But these were strange thoughts for Ophelia. She had never consciously entertained them before, and the hours of the afternoon slipped away with amazing swiftness while she was so occupied. It was five o'clock before she realized it. It was nearing six when Thornwell Dare came up the path, and Ophelia looked at him in consternation.

His clothes were muddy, the brim of his hat was torn, and he moved stealthily, with the unmistakable intention of slipping into the house unobserved.

"Ophelia!" breathed Mrs. Perkins, who had come to stand behind Ophelia in the doorway and now clutched her arm. "Look! Is that Mr. Dare? And you tell me he isn't a suspicious character! And where is Urilda? She

should have been back from Cedar Grove long ago!"

"He probably met her on the way home, murdered her just to keep his hand in, and buried the corpse on the beach," teased Ophelia, but she was conscious of a sudden and inexplicable numbness in the region of her heart, and she went into the dining room, to see that supper was ready, with a decided worry wrinkle between her eyes.

#### CHAPTER IX.

Thornwell Dare appeared at the supper table his usual immaculate self.

Mrs. Perkins surprised him by the persistency of her fascinated stare, but the arrival of the two new boarders prevented the others from discerning this.

One of the new arrivals was tall and thin and red-haired, the comic-supplement edition of a schoolmarm; the other was small and stout, with bright, inquisitive eyes behind her glasses. Both of them were past the age when a Romeo might be considered necessary to peace of mind. The smaller of the two was very talkative and genial, with an obsession for coincidences and parlor tricks. She announced a knowledge of palmistry, and gathered the circle around her in the sitting room without loss of time, to read the secrets of their past, present, and future lives as revealed by their treacherous hands.

"And now the gentleman," she said, when Urilda had rent the veil and Mrs. Bidlowe had exclaimed that it was incredible that she should have discovered the number of proposals she had had.

But Thornwell Dare shook his head, to the disappointment of every one present.

"I wouldn't care," he told them, "to have the secrets of my dark past revealed."

Mrs. Perkins was seized with a nervous spasm of coughing that threatened to strangle her.

"Ah," cried the little black-eyed lady, "you can laugh, young man, but the last time I read a man's hand for him—it was up in Alaska where we went one summer on a wonderful trip—I said to him, 'There's something in your life that you're ashamed of, that you want to hide!' And he cursed frightfully and snatched his hand away and dashed out of the room. They caught him the next day, and he was a noted desperado. He'd robbed a mine or a stagecoach or something; I forget just what."

In the babble of excited comment that arose, Ophelia slipped out of the room. She went to stand at the corner of the porch that was farthest from the sitting room, and leaned her head against a post, and strove to clear away, in the cool, pine-scented air, the swarming cloud of doubts and questions that assailed her.

She started when a voice at her side asked, "Dreaming?" and she turned guiltily to face Thornwell Dare.

"Care to go out in the catboat I see down yonder at the pier?" he asked. "There's something I want to say to you—and I shouldn't like an audience."

They went so quietly down the walk that the group in the sitting room did not hear them go. Neither spoke for the distance down the wharf. The moon was low on the horizon—an almost full, orange disk of a moon that sent the trail of a silver serpent across the waters and touched the tip of the sail with a mere gleam of light. The air had been very still up at the white cottage and on the beach, but as they pulled in the anchor and moved away from the wharf, a little wind came up out of the night to flick the sea and fill the sail and cool Ophelia's cheeks.

She sat in the bow of the boat, her hands folded in her lap, her head tilted gratefully to the caressing breeze. There were times—and this was one of them—when active independence was easily forgotten, and if the thought of the

clinging vine was not attractive, that of the pliant rush might be.

"I can manage the tiller rope," she offered tentatively, however.

"Thanks," said Thornwell Dare. "One man can run this little boat."

So Ophelia sat very still, and watched the path that led to the moon. They were sailing straight along that path, the orange disk apparently their goal, but as swiftly as they glided over the water, more swiftly still the moon rose in the sky, swiftly and silently as if to lure them on.

"In the words of Urilda—quite some moon!" said Thornwell Dare at last.

Ophelia's dazzled eyes came back on the instant.

"By the way—did I understand you to say that Urilda was an only child?" he asked.

"I believe she is—yes, of course, I know she is," said Ophelia, puzzled a bit by the irrelevancy of the question.

"And her father—has banana plantations, did you say?"

"She must have told you that herself. I don't remember discussing it."

"There's a great deal of money in bananas," said Thornwell Dare in a speculative tone.

Through the cool, romantic beauty of the night, the words carried with them a suggestion that precipitated once more Ophelia's unpleasant thoughts. She turned her head quickly, but only the man's profile was to be seen and that blurred in the shadow. Her own face showed as clear cut as a cameo in the moonlight and any one might have seen the furrow of her frown.

"People die so frequently in those tropical countries," he continued. "Tarantulas—and fevers—and all that sort of thing. So fatal. And Urilda is a thoughtless young person to be burdened with all that wealth. If some adventurous gentleman should come along——"

"Was it about Urilda that you wanted to speak to me?" asked Ophelia.

"Lord bless you, no! Careful there! I'm going to gybe!"

She crouched low in the bottom of the boat while the boom swung over her head as they turned to catch the shifting breeze. The waters slapped sharply against the boat's side and showered her with spray. When she straightened up again, the moonlight was striking full across the boat, and Thornwell Dare's countenance was plainly revealed—guileless, a bit perturbed, perhaps.

"It's about you—and me—and this remarkable bargain of ours that I wanted to say a word. I'm afraid I'll have to break my contract. From recent developments, it looks as if I might have to leave this part of the world at a moment's notice. I can't say for certain. My movements depend upon those of other people."

He paused, but what he had said was singing itself over and over in Ophelia's mind. It had a sinister, suggestive ring that grew more distinct with every repetition. Her mother's insistence that Mr. Dare was a fugitive from justice seemed not so foolish now. She trailed one hand in the water and watched, without seeing it, the phosphorescent outline that her fingers made.

"And of course—it's only a word of advice—but if I do have to leave, I don't believe I'd run that advertisement for a Romeo again, if I were you. It's none of my business, you might say—but it only happened that I wasn't the sort of person to steal the spoons—or run off with Urilda. You say your mother feels responsible there."

"Urilda is the least of my worries!" cried Ophelia. The hand in the water sent a flare of mysterious brilliance in the wake of an impatient fling. "Of course if you have to go——"

"I'm not saying much about it, by the way. I only felt it would be fair to warn you. After all, the summer's well

on its way. You've been fairly successful as a housekeeper, haven't you? My going won't leave you in the lurch?"

Ophelia protested quickly:

"Not at all!"

She dried her hand with great care on her handkerchief and spaced her words judiciously, but a disturbing little pulse had wakened in her throat. The moon was riding high in the heavens now, coolly aloof. Its radiance was behind them, and the air was noticeably chill. Ophelia shivered.

"We'll be going in, please," she said. "I really shouldn't have come out at all."

He turned for a deliberate scrutiny of her face, but she avoided his eyes. With some difficulty, he located the lights of the white cottage among the many on the curving beach, and steered in toward the pier.

"You know," he said, "I'd like very much to tell you my tale of woe—why it is that I'm leaving in this sudden and mysterious way." Ophelia's attitude toward him softened at the words. "But—I can't," he ended.

She was furious with herself for having softened.

"You see—it isn't altogether my secret," he told her, and to her horrified senses the words carried the significance of crime. "I'm suffering for some one else's shortcomings. I'm tied hand and foot in one place or moved over the map like a pawn because of what some one else has done. It's pretty hard on a chap. Suppose, now, there were some one—a girl—in whose eyes I wanted to appear particularly well, what do you suppose that girl would think of me? What chance would I have?"

But Ophelia sprang out onto the pier ahead of him, gathering her skirts about her as if to save them from contaminating contact.

"Really—I can't imagine," she said, and went up the wharf with the tread of an Amazon.



That Amazonian tread was the refuge to which she fled whenever she felt most nearly overcome by feminine emotions.

## CHAPTER X.

"Any worrying there is to be done," Ophelia had said to her mother, "I'll do."

Assuredly she did her share that

Ophelia turned restlessly, flinging her arms over her head, resting one of them across her eyes to shut out the light. But wherever she turned she was confronted by a vision of Thornwell Dare. He smiled at her across that bar of moonlight; he evolved mysteriously from the shadowed corners of the room; a stray gleam of light on the mirror suggested oddly his flashing smile; the whispering curtains hinted of his voice.



In the mild excitement, the meal came to an end with attention diverted from the mysterious noise in Mr. Dare's room.

night. She lay awake for hours, staring into the shadows of her room and worrying over Thornwell Dare.

The wind was blowing steadily in through her windows, so that the short white muslin curtains rose and fell with a flickering whisper. The sound of the incoming tide beat faintly upon the beach, and the wind in the pine trees moaned unceasingly. The moonlight fell in a broad white band across her pillow.

What was it he had said about Urilda? Was there really anything suspicious in that? And at the last— It hadn't been Urilda he had been speaking of then—some girl for whom he cared—

Who was he, anyhow? Thornwell Dare was not his name. And yet he had never told her any other. She remembered with shame the interview in the summerhouse in which she had so childishly ignored important details.

She should, of course, have asked him for references, something to establish his identity. Her mother always asked new boarders—quite tactfully—who they were. But she, who had thought herself so competent to handle her mother's affairs, had foolishly run the risk—of what?

Was Thornwell Dare the man the sheriff had told her mother about? Certainly his attempted confession, his warning of a sudden and unheralded departure, pointed to that. And it had been such a worn explanation—the suggestion that he was shielding another from that other's crime!

Ophelia laughed scornfully when she remembered that, but the pillow muffled her laughter to a suspiciously uncertain sound.

She should have known, she told herself cynically, that any man who could flirt with three women at once was a suspicious character. And he had laughed with her at the other three all the time! She buried her face in her pillow to hide it from herself. A persistent little thought was stirring in her mind: "He wasn't flirting with you! Not with you!"

The cuckoo clock in Mrs. Perkins' room interrupted the thought by hiccupping three times. It was an ancient and erratic cuckoo, more of a keepsake than a faithful servant. When the sound had died away, Ophelia turned resolutely on her side and tried to sleep. She was wider awake than ever, tormented by her thoughts.

What ought she to do about Thornwell Dare? Tell her mother the whole silly scheme and get rid of him without loss of time? Send him away before his career of crime incriminated them?

Somehow the thought of sending him away did not appeal strongly, although she was sure he ought to go. She was conscious of this while listening to a monotonous sound such as a saw makes when drawn carefully through seasoned

wood. It was also the sound that a rat makes when he creeps down from the garret between the walls.

Ophelia turned resolutely on the other side and counted sheep. When no more than a hundred had gone over the gate, it seemed to her that the broad path of moonlight was the path to an orange disk of a moon, that the spray was cold upon her face, that she and one other were in a boat, sailing on forever over phosphorescent seas.

"You know I have no use for men," she was saying to that other one, "so please don't murder your wife, and I'll let Urilda marry you——"

The filing sound and the wind in the pine trees, the whisper of the tide on the sand, blended into one mysterious, peacefully chaotic sound. Everywhere there was mystery.

Ophelia was as cool and composed as usual at breakfast the next morning, but her mother's eyes rested with annoying frequency upon her face. She had noticed Ophelia's absence from the sitting room the evening before, she had noticed Thornwell Dare's, and she meant to question Ophelia upon the first chance that presented itself.

"What a gorgeous moon there was last night!" said Mrs. Bidlowe, as she sugared her oatmeal. "Did you notice it, Mr. Dare?" What she wanted to ask was where he had been—and with whom.

"The moon? Oh, yes, my favorite vegetable!" said the imperturbable Mr. Dare.

Some one laughed. The little black-eyed lady looked at him over her glasses.

"Does it occur to you, young man," she said, "that you have a very frivolous mind for one in a responsible position—the only man in the house, protector to so many ladies? I can tell you, for a few minutes last night I was glad to re-



member that there was a man within call. I hope you have a gun."

She created, as indeed she had known she would, a perceptible sensation. Spoons paused, halfway from oatmeal saucers to gaping mouths; Mrs. Perkins leaned eagerly forward in her chair; Mr. Dare looked amiably surprised.

"It's against the law to carry dangerous weapons," he suggested.

"About one o'clock, I think it was," the lady was saying to Mrs. Perkins, "I woke quite suddenly, as I sometimes do. My sense of hearing is unusually acute and the slightest thing wakens me. Agatha's snoring——"

The tall, red-haired lady paused in consuming her oatmeal to answer this thrust:

"I suppose you're being humorous at my expense, Alice. You know I never snore."

"Well—something woke me last night. Agatha says it wasn't her snoring. I couldn't decide for quite a while what sort of a noise it was. Are those cornmeal cakes? I'll have some, please. Then I realized that it wasn't in our room."

"What sort of a noise did you finally hear?" Ophelia asked.

"The sort of sound that somebody makes when they move round a room very carefully in the dark—afraid of waking other people up. I shook Agatha finally, and she heard it, too."

"A mouse," suggested Mrs. Bidlowe.

"It couldn't have been a mouse," said Mrs. Perkins quickly, "because there was a trap in the corner of the room."

"I got up after I'd wakened Agatha—I'm a great one for ferreting things out—and I listened and looked in every corner of the room."

"Weren't you horribly afraid?"

"I always sleep with a hatpin or a hairbrush or some such inconspicuous weapon under my pillow. You've no idea how dangerous they really are!"

"And did you find——"

"The noise was in some one else's room. Just as I was thinking of calling Mr. Dare—of rousing the household—it stopped!"

"But in which room did you decide it was?"

Thornwell Dare had finished his breakfast and was preparing to rise and leave the table, rather sooner than was his wont. Mrs. Perkins was showing unmistakable signs of nervousness.

"The one on the right side of mine. I didn't know whose it was."

"Why, that," cried Urilda, "is Mr. Dare's room!"

With a movement awkwardly deliberate, Mrs. Perkins upset her coffee cup, and the rich brown flood spread over the white cloth.

In the mild excitement, the meal came to an end with attention diverted from the mysterious noise in Mr. Dare's room. Mrs. Perkins was almost hysterical over the result of her clumsiness, declaring that she couldn't imagine how she could have done it—it must have been her sleeve or the foolish handle on that cup—but Ophelia regarded her with puzzled and unfilial suspicion.

There was no mistaking her mother's relief when, the suspicion quieted a bit, it was evident that Mr. Dare must have taken the early trolley into the village.

## CHAPTER XL

"Why did you do it?" Ophelia asked her mother, following her to her room.

"The idea, Phelia, honey! You talk as if I'd done it on purpose, and the cloth perfectly fresh! This is only Tuesday. As if I'd dream of such a thing!"

"I thought—it looked as if you didn't want Urilda to say that the noise had been in Mr. Dare's room."

"What earthly reason could I have for keeping people from knowing that a noise came from his room? Of course, if he's so noisy that it disturbs

the other boarders, that's another matter."

The words were reasonable enough, but the tone in which Mrs. Perkins pronounced them was too carefully matter of fact, and Ophelia looked at her with puzzled speculation.

"I can't imagine!" she said.

Mrs. Perkins turned her back and busied herself straightening the modest array of well-worn silver on her dresser. Her thin little hands, with their prominent blue veins, fluttered nervously about the task, and once she stole a sidewise glance at Ophelia.

Ophelia saw that glance, though she pretended not to see it, and she was troubled by the consciousness that, when she left the room, her mother was undoubtedly relieved.

Details exaggerated themselves in her mind throughout the day. It was the first time that Thornwell Dare had deserted the white cottage so early in the morning. Her mother came out of her room after a while to wander from sitting room to dining room restlessly, and seemed to take an unusual interest in the plans of every one. Was Urilda going up to Cedar Grove again? And hadn't she heard the other ladies say they were going down to Biloxi on the trolley? Was Beatrice washing those curtains to-day? And had Ophelia finished already in her room?

Ophelia grew petulant at last.

"*Mütterchen*," she cried, "we're all as busy as we can be! I don't know what they're all planning to do to-day. Why are you so anxious to get us out of the way?"

"Out of the way!" gasped Mrs. Perkins. "How can you speak to me like that, 'Phelia?" And she went back to her own room and shut the door.

An hour later, however, when the white cottage was deserted by all except themselves, Ophelia came suddenly into the sitting room to find her mother just hanging the telephone receiver on the

hook, and the face that she turned toward Ophelia was stricken with guilt.

She took up her neglected knitting with a defiant little air that said more plainly than words that, after all, a parent is not accountable to a child every time she uses the telephone!

Ophelia's hazel eyes were very intent under their black brows. She disliked extremely the element of mystery that was undeniably creeping into the atmosphere. She was determined to clear matters in a scientific way, with the trained mind of a college girl, when her naturally feminine, a trifle illogical mind was leaping to conclusions altogether melodramatic—conclusions worthy of her mother or of the little black-eyed lady who slept with a hatpin or a hairbrush under her pillow and had heard the mysterious noise. She would have liked extremely to know why her mother had been so anxious to use the telephone when no one might overhear her message, but she didn't want to ask.

So she took up the mending that was always waiting for her and sat near her mother, and rocked and mended in silence. The creak of her chair and the click of the knitting needles blended harmoniously after a little while, but after another little while, the noise became distinctly irritating. Mrs. Perkins seemed to find it so. She dropped one stitch and doubled another in the same row. Her fingers halted—fumbled.

"Tsch!" she muttered, and rose to move to another chair where the light fell more clearly.

A paper slipped from the chair she had been sitting in and fluttered to Ophelia's feet, and on that paper there was the blurred and inky likeness of a young man, a description of him, and the placard: "Reward Offered!"

Mrs. Perkins recovered the paper in great confusion and evidently had every intention of secreting it again.

"What is it?" Ophelia asked, striving to appear casual.

"Nothing. Just the description of that young man Mr. Goodyear told me about. They're still looking for him, you know. Isn't that the ladies coming up the walk? Dear me, how time does fly! I had no idea— It must be nearly dinner time. The smell of that cabbage is all over the house. Is every one at home?"

Every one was at home—except Mr. Dare.

"He'll probably come in on the twelve-thirty trolley. We won't wait," Ophelia said, and found relief from the trying situation in the duties incidental to putting dinner on the table.

"I ain't put dem towels in de gemman's room yit," Beatrice told Ophelia. "Bin all mawnin' i'nin' and bin busy wid mah dinner since—"

"Give them here. I'll put them on his washstand. He'll be coming in at any minute now."

"Done come," said Beatrice, her voice half smothered in the steam that rose from the uncovered cabbage. "Come in de back way little while ago an' went straight ter his room. I seed 'm an' I hollered ter 'm, but he ain't answered a-tall. Looked lak he don' want nobody ter notice 'm."

Ophelia took the towels and went quickly to Thornwell Dare's door. There was a decided resentment in the way she knocked. She frowned impatiently at the sound of a slow pacing behind the closed door, the pacing that is intrinsically a part of ghost stories and prison tales, but was decidedly out of place in the white cottage.

It halted at her knock, and in the ensuing silence, she asked herself impatiently what all this foolishness was about. Why didn't he open his door? He knew it was dinner time. She raised her hand and knocked again, and he came to the door in one swift stride and flung it wide.

"Oh, it's you!" he said. "I beg your pardon. Was there anything—"

She crossed the threshold defiantly, the towels on her arm, and then he closed the door and stood with his back against it—or so it seemed.

"The clean towels," said Ophelia, with a scorn that clean towels did not warrant. "Beatrice forgot to put them in your room, and I thought you might need them."

"Oh—much obliged." But he didn't move from in front of the door.

Ophelia wanted to say something sarcastic. She told herself that she abominated this man, that he was deliberately making himself disagreeable with all this mystery, that he was simply trying to make it appear that her eminently practical plan for attracting boarders was a dangerous one. Though why he should do this unless out of spite to the whole of her sex, with whom he flirted so skillfully—

"Dinner is coming on the table," was the most sarcastic thing she said, and she moved to leave the room.

He was still leaning against the door. She ignored that fact, and put her hand upon the knob to turn it, but in so doing she brushed against him, and to her infinite surprise, his face twitched with genuine pain and he clapped one hand to his arm just above the elbow.

"Gad!" he murmured, gathered himself together with an evident effort, and moved aside. "I don't believe I care for any dinner. I've a problem to work out—needs my attention. But I would like some hot water in here, please, and—if it's all the same to you—nothing's to be said about this," touching his arm again. He saw Ophelia's horrified expression and made an attempt to smile that was hardly convincing. "Met with a little accident in the woods this morning. Man with a gun gave me a scratch."

In the face of his very earnest request, Ophelia left the room with her lips sealed. The dinner bell was ringing even then. But she carried with her

a ghastly conviction that the hand with which he had shielded his arm was stained with blood.

And he wanted nothing said about it!

## CHAPTER XII.

Cabbage and salt meat, rice and potatoes, salad and pudding claimed Ophelia's attention during the nightmare hour that followed, but while she served the constitutionally famished boarders and made pretense of eating what was on her own plate, she was haunted by that figure in the other room and the meager explanation of the man in the woods who had had a gun.

"Doesn't look as if Mr. Dare was coming to dinner at all," said Mrs. Perkins nervously, when the twelve-thirty trolley had passed.

For some reason, she seemed keenly interested in Thornwell Dare's movements. His absence from the table created quite a lull in the conversation. Mrs. Bidlowe was very frankly bored, Urilda curious. The two new boarders, not having grown accustomed to his presence, missed him least of all, but even they spoke of him.

"Such an affable young man!" said Miss Agatha.

"Quite a bit of life in him, or I miss my guess," said her friend.

"Yes?" said Ophelia, to whom this was directly addressed. "Won't you have something else? Beatrice, haven't you some hot corn bread?"

She found it difficult to take the pitcher of hot water he had asked for to his room without being observed, but she managed it somehow, adding a roll of bandage linen, some absorbent cotton, and the antiseptic from her own store. She had only time to put them inside the door when there were footsteps in the hall and she was forced to flee.

It seemed inhuman not to offer to help with the bandaging, but it simply

couldn't be done if he didn't want the news of his accident noised abroad. Mrs. Perkins was more restless than she had been in the morning, if that were possible, and that thought worried Ophelia, too.

Mrs. Perkins talked incessantly of Thornwell Dare. She repeated numberless times to the new boarders that he seemed such a nice young man, but that they really knew nothing about him. He had answered an advertisement. But this was the first time he had been out all day, though there had been afternoons when he had gone off.

"A very entertaining young man, I must say. He's been the life of the place all summer. It'll make quite a difference when he goes."

"When he goes!" exclaimed Ophelia.

Mrs. Perkins laughed an embarrassed little laugh.

"I mean—at the end of the summer, 'Phelia, honey!"

She watched the front gate anxiously, and once, when it clicked, she rose in quite a flutter and went hurriedly to the door, only to retreat when she saw Beatrice going out. Disappointment was so evident that Ophelia felt constrained to speak:

"Are you expecting some one, mother?"

"Of course not—no one at all. That is——" She hesitated, seemed on the point of making an important statement, then changed her mind and murmured: "No one at all!"

Ten minutes later, she came to Ophelia with a paper in her hand.

"You haven't seen this. It really is very interesting, my dear," she said.

It was the paper that she had hidden in her chair that morning, and Ophelia took it hesitatingly and glanced through the headlines. Mrs. Perkins took up her stand in front of the door, watching the gate. She seemed increasingly disappointed as time passed and Thornwell Dare did not return.

"It is too bad!" she murmured once.

"But why, mother? What is too bad?" persisted Ophelia. The boarders had all gone to their rooms and restraint was lessened. "What earthly difference does it make to you—to us?" She hesitated, despite herself, over the pronoun.

"It worries me to have any one stay away like this when I don't know where they've gone—or why," said Mrs. Perkins. "That young man should have been back long ago. It's too bad he should go off like this to-day."

"Why to-day?"

The guard Mrs. Perkins had put upon herself slipped.

"Well, I'll tell you why, 'Phelia, honey," she said, and she nodded her head excitedly as she talked. Her eyes were very bright and the spot of color in either cheek fairly glowed. "I've been so worked up over it all day. I think sometimes maybe I did wrong—and then again I'm so sure! You see—I've notified the sheriff—about Mr. Dare!"

"Mother!" Ophelia's cry was startled. "You've done what?"

"Notified the sheriff," repeated Mrs. Perkins huskily, "about Mr. Dare. And he's coming here after him——"

"Why? What did you tell them he had done?"

"The young man they've been hunting for. Don't you remember, 'Phelia,



"This is unwarranted, outrageous!" she stormed. "My mother is simply nervous! She hasn't been well——"

honey?" reminded Mrs. Perkins gently. "It's all there in the paper, the description of him and everything. It just fits Mr. Dare. I'm so sure he's the one that I can't sleep at night. And if he is, of course I want them to take him away. It's just as that lady said this morning—we're a lot of unprotected women, and if this man should take it into his head to cut our throats, as he did his poor wife's, who could stop him? The sheriff wasn't at home when I phoned, but they said he'd come as soon as he could. He was out hunting for this man then. He may come at any minute now, and it does look as if Mr. Dare had gotten away after all. His trunk's here, though, isn't it? I suppose he'll come back for that. Don't

look at me as if I'd gone crazy, Ophelia!"

"I—think you—have."

"You're speaking to your mother, Ophelia!"

"I think you've made a big mistake: Mr. Dare is——" She was going to say, "in his room," but something stopped her—an emotion, an instinctive sense of protection that she had no more control over than she had over the pulses that were beating so loudly in her temples.

But Mrs. Perkins did not notice the pause. She was watching the walk with fascinated eyes, for up that walk came the sheriff and two deputies, one of the deputies carrying a gun.

"Oh," she cried as they paused on the porch, "it's the most annoying thing! He hasn't come home yet."

Ophelia stood by the table, listening in tense silence, holding herself in readiness.

"Told me ter home you'd sent word yer had a young feller down here as yer suspected," drawled the sheriff.

"And I have—that is, I had—but he went off this morning and hasn't come home yet."

"My mother's made a great mistake," said Ophelia, coming forward. "The young man who's staying here isn't the one you want at all."

They turned to her inquiringly, while Mrs. Perkins uttered a weak protest.

"The young man you're looking for was named"—she referred to the paper she still held—"Bachman, wasn't he? And the man who's staying here is a Mr. Dare."

"Names don't signify to that kind, miss," said the sheriff. "Some slip 'm off an' on easy as a lizard slips his skin. The p'int is—who is this young man, an' what makes yer ma so dead set that he's the right one?"

"We don't know *who* he is!" cried Mrs. Perkins, defending herself eagerly. "He's just been boarding here. And he

behaves most peculiarly—flirting with every woman in the house—and he fits that description in the paper exactly!"

The truth of that last thought struck Ophelia with an overwhelming sense of catastrophe.

"Ain't come in yet? There mought be somethin' in that, now! We ran acrost him uptown ter-day. Got the nerve o' the ol' devil fer comin' round where folks is! One o' my deperties took a shot at 'm, an' he took er shot back—just fer luck." He retreated to the steps and spat carefully into the dust, came back to the sitting room, and stood stroking his beard meditatively. "Waal—I'll tell yer. We might take er look at this chap's room, seein' as we're here an' he ain't. No tellin' what incriminatin' evidence we'll find."

"Mother!" cried Ophelia. "You wouldn't——"

But apparently Mrs. Perkins would. She was already showing them the way.

"You don't seem to realize, 'Phelia," she said, "that I have to protect you as well as myself and the other boarders. You're just an impulsive child!"

What Ophelia did realize was that they must not find Thornwell Dare in his room. She had a sudden, aching remembrance of his face flicked with the pain of the incriminating wound. She was stung by the mastering thought that he trusted her—and needed her.

She reached the door of his room before them and flung one arm across it to bar the way.

"This is unwarranted, outrageous!" she stormed. "My mother is simply nervous! She hasn't been well——"

"Ophelia!" protested Mrs. Perkins. "Sorry, miss," said the sheriff, and put his hand upon her arm.

She shook it off.

"All of this is utterly absurd! Why, I—I know this Mr. Dare. He's from New Orleans, a personal friend of mine. I can't allow this insulting question——"



"Sorry, miss," said the sheriff, grinning broadly. "He's got a way with the ladies, they say," and he turned the handle of the door.

Thornwell Dare rose from a chair by the window and faced them. His arm was in a sling, his coat off. The table at his side was strewn with papers and documents of an official kind, and he held a pen in his hand.

"Well?" he said crisply. His eyes narrowed impatiently, then widened at recognition of the sheriff. "Well?" he challenged with an unmistakable authority that struck them dumb.

The sheriff stared.

"What the devil do you mean by this? I thought I told you to give me a wide berth."

But the sheriff was stammering and backing out of the room as hastily as he had entered it. It was the ladies' fault, he said. They had told him there was a suspicious character in that room. It was his duty to see— He hadn't rightly recollected where it was Mr. Dent was staying.

"You're not going to—arrest him?" cried Mrs. Perkins from the back-ground. "He's not your man?"

"No'm, I ain't goin' to arrest him. Reckon Dent, of the secret service, ain't our man!"

Ophelia heard him as she fled to her room; heard, too, the hasty opening of doors as the boarders answered to the excitement of her mother's cry. No one could mistake the part she had played in the tableau—that protecting arm flung across the doorway.

She wondered what Thornwell Dare had heard before the door had been opened—what he had heard *her* say.

### CHAPTER XIII.

There was, of course, no keeping the affair quiet after that. The white cottage buzzed with excitement. It was declared that Mr. Dare—whom the sheriff had revealed as Mr. Dent of the

secret service—had been wounded in a hand-to-hand struggle with a desperate criminal who had stabbed him in the arm.

In some mysterious way, the story developed that Mrs. Perkins had helped him to discover the man, who was a bigamist, a murderer, *and* a German spy! Mr. Dare had boarded with the Perkins' because of the valuable assistance Mrs. Perkins could give him. She was really quite wonderful in discovering people of that sort. And the government was very anxious to capture this man. Mr. Dare's wound was not considered dangerous, but there was always a chance of blood poisoning in such cases.

Mr. Dare came to the supper table perforce, and was made much of, to his evident discomfiture. He refused to discuss the affair and discouraged inquiries as to his wound.

Mrs. Perkins insisted upon helping him to everything on the table with a deeply apologetic manner, but Ophelia never once looked at him.

She felt tired and very cross. She wanted to get away from the chattering tongues, the clink of china and glass, the merciless light. It seemed to her that supper would never end and she be free.

But she was at last. And then she made her way swiftly out of the house and down to the beach—straight as the crow flies to the gray, half-buried wreck that had been the scene of so many bonfires. She sat on the sand and leaned her head against the sheltering hull and closed her eyes, to gain a momentary peaceful forgetfulness.

Somehow her eyes would not stay shut. They opened to rest on the stretch of sound that reached out to the horizon, smooth and opalescent as a shield of gray mother of pearl. There was the last suggestion of a sunset flush in the sky; clouds that had been a gorgeous mass of crimson and gold were



now drifts of purple, changing to steel, then to smoke gray, and so to black.

But she was seeing a vision of a golden June afternoon in the summer-house and a young man psychologically true to type. That afternoon seemed ages ago now, and yet she remembered every detail of the foolish way she had questioned him, the very tones of his voice in answering. Then had come that foolishness about Mrs. Bidlowe and Miss Barton—and Urilda.

Running through the remembrance of all the summer days was a glinting thread of what he had said to her—and whether he had meant what he had said—the frequency with which he had seemed to seek her out, and the awakening consciousness that—she liked it! When he had held her hand that night on the beach, she had liked it, though she hadn't known it then. And when he had come to her in consultation—She had grown to look forward to such times. Glances and words had gathered a significance never dreamed before. And when he had made that stumbling confession, when he had referred almost plainly to some girl for whom he—cared—Ophelia knew now that she had liked that most of all!

She faced the situation as honestly as she had faced all others in her life. She acknowledged to herself that she was in love with Thornwell Dare, and then she tried to laugh at herself—at love—at the irony of being caught in the very trap she had laid for others. Her throat contracted cruelly on her laughter, and her lips made no sound. She could never forget the moment when she had barred the way of the sheriff to his room, or when they had opened the door in spite of her and discovered him, so defenseless, as she had thought.

The sand deadened his footsteps so that he dropped beside her before she realized that he was anywhere at hand, and then she cried out, "You!" and laughed a light word of greeting.

"Did you think I wasn't coming?" he said. "I saw you when you left the house. I got away as soon as I could."

Ophelia knew then that she had come to the wreck because she thought he might.

"How is your arm?" she asked.

"Comfortable, thank you."

"You bandaged it yourself?"

"Oh, I've learned the trick of doing things for myself. Had to. Accidents will happen in the service."

"Was it—very bad?"

He looked down at her with the tender, quizzical smile that warmed her heart, but she tried not to let him see.

"Bad enough to serve its purpose. It bled quite a lot—clean sort of scratch where the bullet grazed."

The dusk came over the waters toward them lightly, feeling its way with the first glinting stars and harbor lights.

"Nice old world!" said the man.

"Just my luck to have to leave it."

"You are—going, then?"

"No help for it, after what happened to-day. Now that the ladies are all in on the fact that I'm doing the work I am, I'll have to go to some far corner of the globe and disguise myself as an Eskimo or a Hottentot before I'll be of any use again. By the way, I've never quite straightened out in my mind just what part your mother played."

"She—she thought you were the—other man," said Ophelia, suddenly hot with shame, "and that it was her duty to give you over to the authorities. Mother hasn't been well. She's nervous."

"Thought I was *what*?"

"The man you were looking for."

"The chap who murdered his wife? Gad, did you think that?" He flung the question at her with a vehemence that was deliciously startling in its significant force.

"I didn't think you had—a—wife."

She stumbled somehow over the name.

She didn't mind it when he laughed,

because he said, "No more I have," and laughed again as at a joke. But then he sobered.

"Not that it would have been astonishing if you had thought so. You didn't know a thing about me, except that the name I went by was not my own and that I was ready to dive into any tomfool scheme—I beg your pardon!"

"It was!" acknowledged Ophelia humbly. "A perfectly mad plan! It would have been entirely my fault if you'd proved to be the sort of person to cause all sorts of trouble."

"I have caused some. And if you really want to know—it's my opinion that I'm likely to cause a lot more."

There was a startled question in the quick turn of her head.

"I'll tell you about that in a minute. First, I suppose you'll have to know the sweet, sad story of my life in brief. I'm free, white, and thirty-one. Official name, Thomas Dent. Occupation, secret-service man, though it's best not advertised. I'd been down in Tampico for six months or more and contracted an unholy case of malaria, so they sent me away from there with the advice to forget what I was and who I was for the next month or so. Then this case of the man Bachman came up. He'd come down here to the coast to hide, and the government thought, since I was already in this neck of the woods and times were pretty busy with the department, anyhow, I might just as well take a hand. We've got our hands full with spies just now, and this was a particularly clever devil.

"Well, you know the sort of hand I took. I came here innocently enough in the first place, answering your advertisement for boarders as any one might. You thought I was applying for the Romeo job, and I took the thing up as a lark. Tended to business those afternoons I took off. Of course this

arm does for me. I'll clear out in the next day or so."

Ophelia could no more have suppressed the crooning, commiserating sound she made, the sympathetic hand she reached toward the injured arm, than she could have stopped breathing. But it was unfortunate—or fortunate, according to your point of view. If she hadn't been guilty of that sound, if she hadn't leaned toward him that *nth* of a degree, he would not have leaned so paralyzingly near in his turn.

"Ophelia!"

She had never thought hers a pretty name. She had never been overcome with emotion when she had heard it spoken, but she experienced now a sensation not unlike palpitation of the heart. For one who had always been so scornful of the tender passion, Ophelia was learning very fast.

When he put his arm around her—as he inevitably did—she thought the world had come to an end by crashing into the stars. When he said, "Ophelia, you know girls *do* marry secret-service men in spite of the dark lives they lead!" just for one second, she couldn't get her breath.

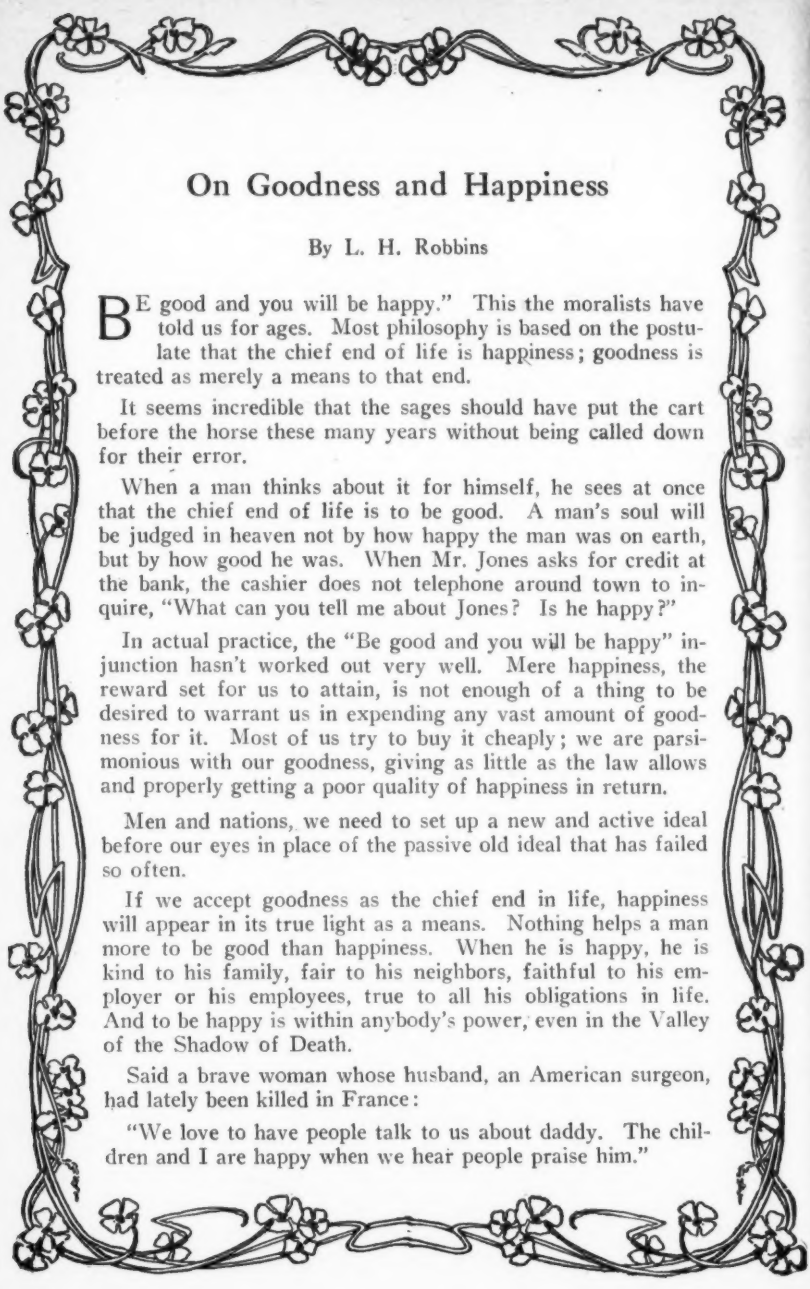
The bluff behind them shut out the unimportant world. The beach was wanly indistinct, deserted save for themselves and a flickering, red-eyed bonfire a picturesque distance away. The waters were murmurous and mysterious with the song of sirens undersea. Mrs. Bidlowe and Uridla, Mrs. Perkins, the other boarders were puppets in a half-forgotten dream.

His clasp around her shoulders tightened.

"Ah!" she cried weakly, and tried to draw away. "But you'll hurt your arm—your hand—"

It needed just one arm of his to draw her close against his shoulder, one hand to cover both of hers.

"Now don't you worry. That's all right. I'm ambidextrous," he said.

A decorative border of stylized flowers and vines surrounds the text.

## On Goodness and Happiness

By L. H. Robbins

**B**E good and you will be happy." This the moralists have told us for ages. Most philosophy is based on the postulate that the chief end of life is happiness; goodness is treated as merely a means to that end.

It seems incredible that the sages should have put the cart before the horse these many years without being called down for their error.

When a man thinks about it for himself, he sees at once that the chief end of life is to be good. A man's soul will be judged in heaven not by how happy the man was on earth, but by how good he was. When Mr. Jones asks for credit at the bank, the cashier does not telephone around town to inquire, "What can you tell me about Jones? Is he happy?"

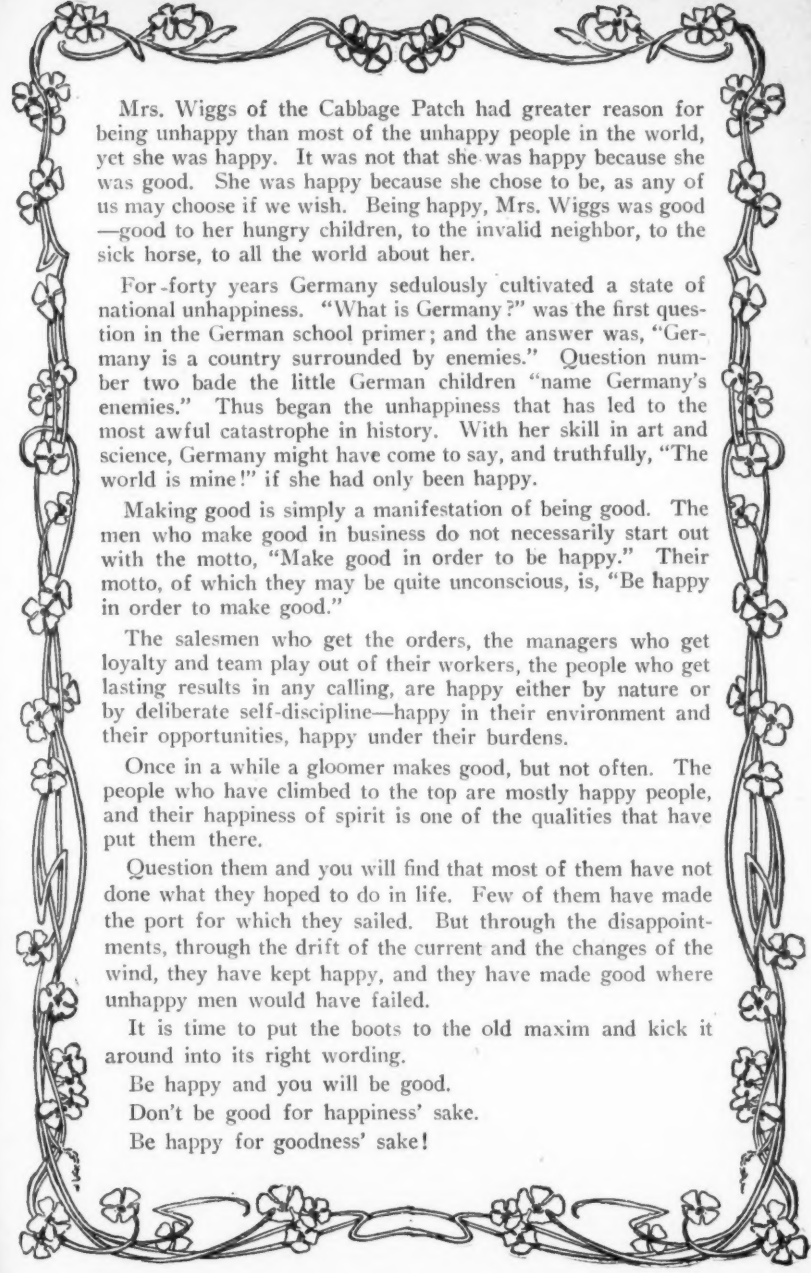
In actual practice, the "Be good and you will be happy" injunction hasn't worked out very well. Mere happiness, the reward set for us to attain, is not enough of a thing to be desired to warrant us in expending any vast amount of goodness for it. Most of us try to buy it cheaply; we are parsimonious with our goodness, giving as little as the law allows and properly getting a poor quality of happiness in return.

Men and nations, we need to set up a new and active ideal before our eyes in place of the passive old ideal that has failed so often.

If we accept goodness as the chief end in life, happiness will appear in its true light as a means. Nothing helps a man more to be good than happiness. When he is happy, he is kind to his family, fair to his neighbors, faithful to his employer or his employees, true to all his obligations in life. And to be happy is within anybody's power, even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Said a brave woman whose husband, an American surgeon, had lately been killed in France:

"We love to have people talk to us about daddy. The children and I are happy when we hear people praise him."



Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch had greater reason for being unhappy than most of the unhappy people in the world, yet she was happy. It was not that she was happy because she was good. She was happy because she chose to be, as any of us may choose if we wish. Being happy, Mrs. Wiggs was good—good to her hungry children, to the invalid neighbor, to the sick horse, to all the world about her.

For forty years Germany sedulously cultivated a state of national unhappiness. "What is Germany?" was the first question in the German school primer; and the answer was, "Germany is a country surrounded by enemies." Question number two bade the little German children "name Germany's enemies." Thus began the unhappiness that has led to the most awful catastrophe in history. With her skill in art and science, Germany might have come to say, and truthfully, "The world is mine!" if she had only been happy.

Making good is simply a manifestation of being good. The men who make good in business do not necessarily start out with the motto, "Make good in order to be happy." Their motto, of which they may be quite unconscious, is, "Be happy in order to make good."

The salesmen who get the orders, the managers who get loyalty and team play out of their workers, the people who get lasting results in any calling, are happy either by nature or by deliberate self-discipline—happy in their environment and their opportunities, happy under their burdens.

Once in a while a gloomer makes good, but not often. The people who have climbed to the top are mostly happy people, and their happiness of spirit is one of the qualities that have put them there.

Question them and you will find that most of them have not done what they hoped to do in life. Few of them have made the port for which they sailed. But through the disappointments, through the drift of the current and the changes of the wind, they have kept happy, and they have made good where unhappy men would have failed.

It is time to put the boots to the old maxim and kick it around into its right wording.

Be happy and you will be good.

Don't be good for happiness' sake.

Be happy for goodness' sake!

# A Watcher of the Skies

By Kay Cleaver Strahan

Author of the "Peggy-Mary" Series, "When a Mother Is Always Joking," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

Is it tragedy—or farce—or merely the story of a boy's loyalty to his first love?

HE brought with him from the country to our city boarding house a trunk so small that the old-maid ladies laughed when they saw the baggageman carrying it up the steps. He brought with him from the country to our city boarding house hopes so big, ideals so positive and so brightly shining, that the old-maid ladies could not see them at all, could not see them any more than they could have seen the sun a few feet away from their pointed noses.

They could see the girl's picture, of course, and they did see it, because he showed it to all of us the day after his arrival—a picture of a plain-faced, gawky girl in an ill-fitting graduation dress, carrying a white cylinder—her diploma. On her right shoulder, she had a watch, fastened with a fleur-de-lis clasp; on her left shoulder, she wore a bunch of flowers pinned in a torturous upside-down position. Her elbows showed sharp through her sleeves. Something, somehow, was the matter with her shoes, and the bow on her hair gave an unbalanced effect to the entire composition. On the back of the picture—the boy turned it proudly for us to see—was written, in twirled and shaded handwriting: "Your loving friend, Floy Hansen."

My hand trembled as I held the picture close to my nearsighted eyes. I felt that I was seeing so much and so pitifully little. The eyes of Floy Hansen, looking steadily into mine, were

such casual eyes, such conventional, such—I need to use the word and I will—such cocksure eyes. And by all that I am merely trying to say that they were the eyes of a very young girl who is greatly loved. With the joys and the sorrows of giving love she had had nothing to do as yet. When she thought of love, she thought of herself, a gracious recipient. When she looked for love, she looked into her mirror.

But blaming youth for egoism is like blaming a baby for toothlessness. The trouble, if trouble there could be, was that the boy—his name was John Godwin, but I can think of him only as the boy—was fine, extraordinarily fine. His egoism, if you will forgive a paradox, seemed to grow out of an entire selflessness. He was going to do big things, live big things, was going to make of his life a life of account; not because it was his life, but because it was the life he had given to Floy Hansen.

He sat next to me at table, but there were no confidential asides, no conversations in a minor key. When the boy had anything to say, and he was not a silent person, he said it to all of us—the two old-maid ladies, the unhappy married couple, the advertisement solicitor, the shoe clerk, the landlady, and me. He was so deeply in love that he loved the whole world, and he was sure that the whole world loved him and his Floy and was interested in them and ever ready to understand and sympathize or joy with them.

His confidence, as far as our little group was concerned, was justified. We weren't big-hearted, unselfish people, but, you see, he believed that we were.

I remember the evening when he came to the table with shining eyes and announced that he had found a "job." No statement made at that board had ever met with such enthusiasm. One of the old-maid ladies clapped her hands; there were congratulations, exclamations of delight. It was as if he had come to us with a platter brimming with joy—his joy, to be sure, but joy—and had invited us to help ourselves because he had more than he needed. We each grabbed greedily, making his pleasure our own.

"Of course, just now, it isn't so much," he said. "Shipping clerk in Bland & Tanker's hardware store. But think of the opportunities! And I'm where I can learn the business from the bottom up."

The advertising solicitor, our permanent pessimist, suggested that no one could get from the bottom to the top without stepping on the other fellow's fingers. He meant it for advice, not for discouragement. He, like the rest of us, had fallen under the spell of the boy's—shall I call it "magic?" No, "youth" will do.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Kennan, the unhappy married man. "It's a question of ability. The best man rises; that's all."

"And the worst man falls," said our permanent pessimist.

"But," said the boy—he was never willing to accept other people's solutions for his problems—"but, even so, don't you think it makes all the difference, takes all the meanness out of it, when a fellow is doing it for some one else? Floy—"

I kicked the pessimist under the table. I was fearful lest he should start caviling about the weaker fellow's "some one else."

He scowled at me resentfully.

"To be sure," he assented. "You've hit the nail on the head."

Shortly after the boy obtained his job—the day after his first pay day, to be exact—he asked Mrs. Martin, our landlady, if he might rent the basement for a workshop. He was going to buy lumber and make the furniture for Floy's home and his. Mrs. Martin said he might use the basement, and gladly at that, but as for paying rent—Land's sakes, did the boy think she was a Sherlock? Mrs. Martin's literary allusions were often confused, but her generosity was ever well defined.

We were all of us, I believe, a bit jealous of that furniture. After the lumber came, the boy hurried through his dinner and then disappeared into the basement, where we could hear him hammering and sawing far into the night. That the noise might disturb some of us never occurred to John. He was making furniture for Floy.

The evening that he brought his first finished chair upstairs for us to view was the evening I had invited Miria Endicott to our boarding house to have dinner with me.

Miria was ever a most baffling young person, and now, as I attempt to describe her, I seem to encounter chiefly bewilderment. Adjective after adjective is summoned and rejected. The words used to describe most girls would fit Miria as ill as Miria would fit a sewing society. Pretty? I suppose so, though "attractive" is a better word. She was slender and graceful; her eyes were a clear tea brown, and her hair was as sleek and shining as a squirrel's coat; but, some way, no one ever gave much thought to Miria's appearance.

Her father was president of an Eastern university. At twenty, Miria had been graduated from the university and had come West, to take her degree in living, she said. Too well poised, too clever, too tired for her age—for she





She spent all her spare evenings with the boy in the basement.  
Sometimes she designed his furniture for him;  
sometimes they talked.

was young, though "modern" seems a better term to apply to Miria's youth—one felt that she was, already, entitled to her M. A.

She made her living, she boasted, out of other people's stupidity. She tutored backward children; she wrote scintillating papers to be read by other women, as their own, before women's clubs; she did speeches for business men to be delivered, *improvisu*, after dinners. Hers was not an occupation conducive to optimism. Only her humor

kept her from being a cynic; as it was, she was a satirist. On the whole, I have never known a more interesting girl than Miria, but I have never known a girl whom I should be more unwilling to call daughter.

As we walked to the boarding house that evening, I tried to tell Miria something of the boy and of his love for Floy Hansen.

"Calf love," she said. "Is that remarkable? Are you getting sentimental, Jane Roth?"

"Perhaps," I admitted. "But this doesn't seem like it—it isn't calf love. The boy glorifies it, makes it—remarkable."

"I'll have to accept your reading of it," she answered, "because, as yet, I've had no time for love. Some day I mean to take it up—the experience is a neces-

sary one—but as yet I have been too busy."

When I introduced her to the youth, he blushed hotly, because, I suppose, of the strong masculine handshake that she affects. I looked at Miria, expecting to see her all a-twinkle because of the blush, but, to my amazement, I saw that she, too, was blushing. I had never seen her blush; I had supposed that she was incapable of it.

Miria never talked merely intelligently, she always talked illuminatively,

but this evening at dinner she was fairly refulgent. She allowed no one else to shine, even reflectively; she dazzled us all into stupidity. The boy was absolutely silent—he would never compete for conversational opportunities—silent and preoccupied. He ate rapidly and, at last, when Miria came to a pause, he asked to be excused and went through the kitchen down into the basement.

In a few moments he returned, bearing his first finished chair. It was not a lovely chair, I'll admit that, but his eyes were glowing with pride and his face was flushed with triumph and—until Miria spoke.

"But it isn't good looking," she said crisply.

The pause seemed interminable. The boy's face clouded. Miria should have wilted beneath the glances that were directed at her, but Miria was not of the wilting variety.

"What—is—the matter with it?" the boy asked.

"It's stodgy and funny," said Miria, "and the lines are impossible. Who does your designing?"

"I—I—just made it," stammered the boy.

Miria smiled. She had learned how to smile.

"But you must not 'just make' any more. It's supposed to be a dining-room chair, isn't it? Let me design one for you. It's easier to make a beautiful thing than it is to make an ugly thing. If I had some paper and a pencil——"

Paper and pencil were furnished. Miria began to draw, and the boy sat beside her. The others—unable, I presume, to endure Miria another instant—went out of the room.

"That imitation-leather seat won't do," said Miria. "Can you afford real leather?"

"No. But this looks like leather, and Floy——"

"See here," Miria interrupted, her pencil poised, "if you'll let me tell you some things about Ruskin, I'll listen while you tell me about—Floy."

I slipped away. It was not a fair sight, and I loved the boy.

It must have been two hours later when Miria knocked on my door.

"You've been a long time," I scolded.

"Yes? But I found him interesting." She tried to make it casual, but she failed.

"I told you——" I twitted.

"No," she interrupted, "you didn't tell me. He couldn't be told. But this divinity of his—— You've seen her picture, you said? What sort is she?"

"She's young," I began, "not more than seventeen——"

"Thank you," said Miria, as if I had finished a long description, and then she laughed and changed the subject. But very soon she said that she was tired and meant to be going.

At the door she caught my hand in hers, an impulsive gesture, wholly alien to the Miria I had known.

"Jane Roth," she laughed, "Floy is not going to have her imitation leather on the chairs."

Three days later, Miria moved from the hotel where she had been living down to our shabby boarding house.

"Miria Endicott," I demanded, looking straight into her clear brown eyes, "why?"

"Jane Roth," she answered, "high priestess of the proper, because I like the cooking."

I refused to receive this answer.

"Then," she conceded mockingly, "say that it is because, when I find something I want, I usually go—and take it."

"And you want—the boy?" I gasped.

"No, I don't. I have no place to put him. But I want the interest he gives me."

"And he? What about him?" I interposed hotly.

"Your protest points toward too many moving pictures," she jeered. "Please, dear friend, absolve me from the rôle of a vampire. I'm not going to harm the boy—I couldn't. I'm going to mold him."

"Molding another woman's clay——" I objected.

"Could she mold it herself? Truth, now! You've seen the picture that I saw this evening—a smug, tight-minded child. Because of her, am I to allow all that beauty, all that gloriousness, to go to waste? It would be wicked!"

"He isn't allowing it to go to waste," I insisted.

"You think not? When he's using it all for the loving of a—a—Floy Hansen?"

"Do you intend to try to make him stop loving her?" I was angry. "Do you intend to destroy his ideal—to——"

"Ideal! Rubbish!" She, too, was angry. "I merely want him to wait to love. He's twenty-three—my age—and what does he know? Nothing—but Floy Hansen. And soon, when he gets his 'raise,' he's going to give all of his beauty, all of his possibilities to her. That conventional, pride-bursting little thing! She'll feed on them and grow fat! If you must have a vampire, take her. There are thousands of women like her, in every strata of society—fat, complacent women who have eaten—eaten, I say—their husbands' individualities and hopes and possibilities of perfection. Tell me, Jane Roth, what gift can she have for him? No—it is wrong! Let him keep his life for his own until he has made use of it—until he at least is wise enough to present it to some woman who can be an ally and not—an absorber! I——" She pulled herself up sharply, ashamed of her intensity. "Forgive my verbosity," she half drawled. "I'll have to give over this platform lecturing."

"Child," I said, "it isn't safe to go meddling about in the lives of others."

"It isn't right, it isn't brave, not to!" she flashed.

We did not talk together again for two months. Miria had no time to give to me. She spent all her spare evenings with the boy in the basement. Sometimes she designed his furniture for him; sometimes they talked; sometimes she read aloud while he worked away, making the furniture for his home and Floy's.

The old-maid ladies were scandalized. The other boarders, according to their dispositions, were amused or indifferent. Mrs. Martin was worried.

"I don't know as I'd ought to have let her come here," she said to me. "Not," she hastened to explain, "but what I think your friend is a perfect lady, but she's too up-to-datish for him. She'll get wrong ideas in his head."

"She doesn't seem to be changing him," I encouraged.

"No," Mrs. Martin agreed, "she don't. I guess it'd take more than a lady like her to change a boy like him."

That evening, at dinner, I watched Miria and the boy with an old woman's prying eyes, and I came soon to the conclusion that Miria was different from the Miria of two months ago, but that the boy was unchanged. He still talked frankly, giving to us from his surplus of joy; he still hoped largely and believed simply. But Miria, or so it seemed to me, was no more to him than was the old-maid lady who sat next to her.

Miria waited in the hall for me, after dinner, and went with me to my room.

"I saw you trying to peep through the keyhole this evening," she said, "so I came to open the door for you. You think I'm failing—that I have failed. I haven't, and I won't. He isn't a ball of putty in my hands, and I'm glad that he's not. Any one can pinch putty into some shape. He's a block of fine marble. He's!"—she leaned forward in her

chair, clasped her hands between her knees, and looked straight into my eyes—"he's, in fact, a man worth loving. And I love him. If you like, you may tell that to every suspicious, snooping soul in this house. I'd like to tell them."

"You—have told—him?" I quavered.

"No — n o t exactly."

"But—Miria—"

"And so," she continued, paying no attention to my remonstrance, "and so I'm going to marry him. And then I'm going to send him to a university. He must study law. It's the easiest entrance into public life.

He'll be governor by the time he's thirty and—what a governor! America needs men of his sort, needs them in positions where they can be felt. I have money, you know, lots of it—my grandmother's. I haven't used it, because I wanted to make my own money. But I'll use it now as a tool to help carve John's career. I can't keep on working. I must have babies. I'll need them,

because he'll have no time for me for years and years."

"And—John? What does he—"

"Oh—I haven't told him as yet. He doesn't know—anything. Wait. I'll answer that second question you're preparing to put. Floy, my dear friend, is jealous."

"That answers no question of mine," I objected.



"Now that you have me appraised," she mocked, "what do you think of my chances? Can I lose?"

"But it does. 'Why,' you are thinking, 'if she loves him, why doesn't she lend him the money for his education and allow him to marry his—Floy, be true to his first love?' All that manner of twaddle. I have answered: Floy is jealous. 'She'd not be jealous only of me, refusing to let him borrow money from 'the other woman;' she'd be jealous of his studies, his friends, his associates, his successes. She's the sort of woman who would sit on the platform and hand glasses of water, not to the speaker, but to *her husband*. Oh—bah!"

She shook her head impatiently, rose, stretched her arms high, clasped her hands above her head, and swayed backward a trifle. She was wearing a gown of soft green satin, far too splendid in its very simplicity for our boarding-house, a gown that insisted upon her beauty. I remembered the girl of the picture, as I looked at Miria standing there, and I attempted a balance. To Miria I gave loveliness, a consciousness of charm, and knowledge; to Floy I gave innocence and possession.

Miria laughed down at me, and I realized that she had been purposely posing.

"Now that you have me appraised," she mocked, "what do you think of my chances? Can I lose?" And then she laughed, and then she was gone, and the door was closed softly behind her.

Once more several sheets of months were torn from my calendar before Miria again gave me her company or her confidences. During those months, Germany began her submarine tactics and war was on its way to our country. We heard its rumblings, but we refused to listen. And even on the day when the break with Germany made us know that war was inevitable, we said, cravenly, that Europe was very far away, with the Atlantic Ocean between.

"It can't," said the shoe clerk, "make any material difference to us."

"Invasion, of course, would be impossible. Or—would it?" quavered one of the old-maid ladies.

"They will never pass conscription here, at any rate," asserted the unhappy married man.

So we chattered on, all of us, saying nothing of the least account, until the boy spoke.

"I'm going to enlist to-morrow," he said. "Floy is willing. Her father was in the Civil War."

"Absurd!" It was Miria, and she spoke in a high, unnatural voice. "You can do more for your country in other ways than by offering yourself for cannon fodder!"

"Packing teapots and saucepans?" smiled the boy.

"Not now, perhaps, but in time——"

"Only," the boy interrupted, "there isn't time. The United States needs her men now."

After dinner that evening, the boy went to his room and Miria came to mine. She talked irrationally, saying nothing of importance, but repeating, "He shall not go!" to a maddening monotony.

When I came downstairs the next morning, I saw Miria and the boy in the hall, talking together.

"I am afraid, Miss Endicott, that you don't understand," I heard him say, as I passed them, and before I had reached the door of the dining room, the outer door had closed and he had gone. Miria did not come in for breakfast.

That day he offered himself for enlistment and was rejected. He was not at dinner that evening—he would not share his disappointment with us, as he had shared his joy—but the advertising man had met him on his way home, and it was he who told us about it.

"Something or other the matter with the kid's heart," he said. "He's all cut up about it."

I looked at Miria. Her face was pale and her eyes were unnaturally bright,

but she said nothing. The old-maid ladies clucked their sympathy. Mrs. Martin suggested that perhaps everything was for the best in this world. During the remainder of the meal, the subject was avoided because, I think, each of us was conscious of hypocrisy, busy offering up mental thanksgivings because of the boy's disappointment.

He shamed us the next evening because he was so shamed, so pathetically apologetic.

"But," Mrs. Martin tried to console, "you can feel that you have done your duty, anyway."

"No," he answered, "all that I can feel is that I'm not fit to do my duty. But there must be some way out of it," he went on. "There must be. When a fellow wants any good thing, enough, he must be allowed to get it—or do it. It seems as if there must be a mistake somewhere. My heart has never bothered me any. I can't understand——"

For three days the boy was worsted and then, perhaps because he wanted, enough, to do a good thing, he found his way to do it.

When he came in, and before he had said one word that evening, I knew, from the glow of his face, that his problem was solved. I think Miria knew it, also, for there was something not far from terror in her eyes as we took our places at the table.

"It's all right," the boy spoke at once. "I've found a way to help. Jeff Hansen—he's Floy's cousin—wants to go to war, but he can't, because of his mother. She's past seventy and crippled. So Floy and I are going to be married right away and I'm going to take his place and let him go. He's been examined, and he's fit. I knew there must be a way out."

"What," inquired Miria, in a strained, steady voice, "is—Jeff's place?"

"That's the best of it!" glowed the youth. "He has a little farm, 'way up in the country. The papers say the gov-

ernment is going to need farmers as much as soldiers, so I'll be helping both ways. It isn't," he admitted, "a very good farm. It's rock soil and brake, but I can get a living for the three of us out of it this year. That'll keep us at least from taking food others might be using. And next year, with an early start, I may be able to produce some for the country. Jeff's never had time for the place, because he's had to take care of Aunt Ada, but Floy will take care of her, now, so I can give all of my time to it."

"And Floy," probed Miria shamelessly, "how does she like this arrangement? I thought you had planned to live in a city, where you could have the city's advantages—the college-extension lectures, the libraries and museums—all that."

"We did want to," answered the boy, "but *now*, of course, we don't. That is," he amended, with his usual scrupulous honesty, "Floy is willing to do this, now. She doesn't think the war will last very long; she said so in her last letter."

"She hasn't been happy at home, either, has she?" Miria insinuated. "Of late, since her father has married again?"

The boy missed the insinuation.

"That's another fine thing about it," he said. "We can be married right away."

The look Miria sent to me was the look of a person in peril, begging for rescue, but I could not aid her.

"When do you leave?" asked Mrs. Martin.

"In the morning. We're going to be married day after to-morrow," he bragged.

He told us good-by that evening. The most selfish of us could feel no sorrow over the leave-takings, because the boy was so radiantly happy.

I went to my room and waited for



Miria, but she did not come. I do not know what intuition, what impulse it was that prompted me, at last, after the clocks had struck eleven, to go to the basement. At any rate, I went, and I found Miria there, sitting straight in one of the chairs the boy had made. She had her features well in order. Her eyes were wide and tearless, her brow was smooth, and her lips were scarcely compressed, but, as I looked and remembered the glowing girl of the satin gown, I realized that something important, something necessary, had been erased permanently from Miria's face.

"Child," I said, trying to appeal to her sense of the satiric, "don't be dramatic—melodramatic! Come with me to my room and go to bed."

She rose.

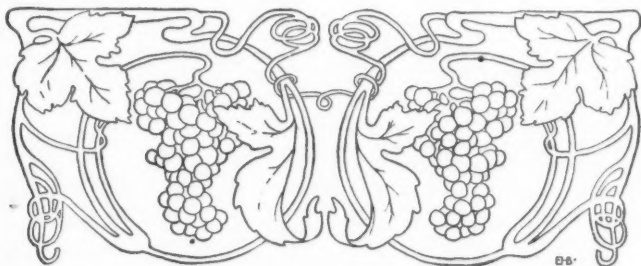
"You're right," she said. "I've been indulging. I'll go up, but not to your room. You'd attempt consolation. There is none. There's only a fact, and that is—he never saw me. It would

be easy had he simply failed to love me. The unendurable, bitter fact of it is—he never saw me."

And that is the end. Some of you may have read a tragedy into this; some of you may have read a farce; many of you, I fear, will insist that this was no story at all, but merely the recounting of one boy's loyalty, one boy from a world full of boys quite like him.

Miria? She gave her money and herself to the Red Cross work. She's in France now, and in her last letter to me there was this paragraph:

"Each day, to my shame, I find it increasingly hard to remember. I have to fight against forgetfulness. If ever I say or write to you, 'I no longer have my love. The sorrow and the horror here have crowded it from my heart,' then, dear friend, send me your pity, for I shall need it. Until then, please hoard your pity to give to those whose lives are as empty as mine was, for those who have never found high victory through failure."



### THE DOOR

THE littlest door, the inner door,  
I swing it wide.  
Now in my heart there is no more  
To hide.

The farthest door—the latch at last  
Is lifted; see!  
I kept the little fortress fast.  
Be good to me.

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

# The Only Man

By Lucy Stone Terrill

Author of "For To-morrow," "Echoes from the Exposition," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. L. LAMBDIN

All about a poem called "Do You Remember, Too?" and the sentiments it stirred in the breasts of three men.

FROM the time she first published a poem in the "Home Helps" column of the *Women's Weekly*, Jean Dayton had longed for a studio. At that time she was teaching school in Lakeview, a desert town in California; and since school-teachers are not indigenous to studios, or studios to Lakeview, Jean roomed.

Five years elapsed before she achieved her studio; for she married a home-loving physician of considerable income—and they were happy, so happy that a charming apartment and many friends sufficed to smother her studio-like aspirations. But during these five years, her occasional poems had climbed from the "Home Helps" column to some of the most utterly correct library-table magazines; and when editors visited Los Angeles, she lunched with them, experiencing vagrant longings for a New York studio that should be filled with fireplaces, teacups, and interesting people.

This half-dormant desire was fulfilled suddenly, but through a condition over which Jean had not the slightest control—the war. For her husband sailed with the second hospital unit to France, and Ruth accompanied him as far as New York. She brought with her two packing cases of books, rugs, vases, candlesticks, pictures, percolator, electric toaster, flatiron, guava jelly, and numerous photographs of Paul—all framed.

Paul was not passionately enthusiastic over studios; in fact, he had suggested that Jean should have his mother with her—a gentle-mannered old lady of positive antisuffrage convictions. But since he loved Jean, he compromised on studios *until* the Germans were conquered.

His last gift to her was a diminutive typewriter that collapsed amazingly into a lovely little leather traveling bag with her name on it in small gold letters. Three days after he sailed, Jean was triumphantly ensconced in a remodeled old house and stable, called the "Success Studios," equipped with a blazing determination to give every cent of her regular income to the Belgians or Serbians or *somebody*, and to support herself entirely by her own efforts.

Though there could be not the slightest doubt of the studio's *validity*, yet, at the very first, it seemed incredibly *room-like*. Jean had expected an indefinable atmosphere to prevail that should be fuel for her ambitions; but, instead, she encountered annoyances reminiscent of her rooming-house days—such as an absent couch leg, stubborn door locks, nail holes just where she preferred *not* to hang pictures, and wall paper depicting conventionalized, but animated roses in ceaseless pursuit of fleeing anemones.

But gradually, after the arrival of her packing cases, and after the first intense loneliness for Paul wore away, the stu-



Dalmores announced through the partition: "Say, mother, we're having a party at your house to-night."

dio began to exhibit evidence of being such. The housekeeper's name was "Valerie;" she had been the wife of a Russian count and she interior-decorated. The janitor wrote socialistic poetry under a nom de plume—to avoid difficulties with the union—and the window washer gave French lessons in the basement every second evening. And then there were distinctive noises—medleys of pianos, typewriters, clog dancers' footsteps, sopranos, contraltos, tenors, and ukuleles.

Jean's neighbors did not evince any friendliness for the first few weeks,

but she knew they were all famous because Valerie admitted no one to the Success Studios who was not "really doing things." And gradually Jean attained to an unassailable social position, perhaps owing slightly to the fact that she always had fuel and food.

She had been obliged regretfully to relinquish from her expense account two Belgian babies and mattresses for Italian hospital beds, in order to provide herself with the luxuries of wood and sugar; otherwise, in the matter of necessities, she was succeeding in being "financially independent."

But one night in January she found herself confronted with two perfectly good returned manuscripts, no ideas whatever to put into print, an artistic reminder from Valerie that it was a new month, and only philanthropic little stubs in her check book to comfort her with the knowledge of having a regular income.

So it was that she did not feel her usual thrill of hospitality when Bruce Dalmores—artist of realism—announced through the partition of their studios:

"Say, mother, we're having a party at your house to-night."

This filial appellation was due to the fact that Jean was the only "married-and-glad-of-it" resident of the Success Studios.

"You're not, if I can prevent it," she returned promptly. "If you don't leave me alone long enough to work a little, you'll soon all have to starve. I'm broke."

"What? You?"

"Me."

"I don't believe you. I smell stew."

"You don't. There isn't an onion in it. Go on up to Delmonico's and get yourself a bite. *Don't* bother me—please!"

"I'm not going to bother you. I'm going to dinner with some people I've always hated, but they've had coal all this week and darned if I'm not getting so I actually like 'em! Going to paint 'em a picture. But the party's all arranged for, and it's too late to annul it."

"Oh, but listen, Bruce!" Jean expostulated earnestly. "I've got to write a fifty-dollar poem to-night. And it's too cold in here for a party."

"Cold! Why, woman, *waves* of heat are coming in through this partition! I hung my thermometer on your wall this morning, and it climbed up above zero in no time. Don't argue with me. A woman with an electric toaster and a

bathtub full of wood ought to be *glad* to entertain her friends. Besides, you've got a kerosene lamp, haven't you?"

"Yes, but there's no oil in it."

"Oh, well, it looks warm, anyway. You see, it's Dimity's birthday—first one she's had in three years—so we've got to have a party. Expect us at eight-thirty. I'll ask these plutocrats where I'm dining if I can't bring home my handkerchief full of coal. Oh, say, and get my cocktail shaker from Millicent."

He departed with a slamming of doors and loud footsteps down the stairs, deaf to Jean's sincere expostulations. Swathed in a golf sweater, a bath robe, and the couch cover, she sought desperately to compose her thoughts to poetry. She attempted a sonnet on "Heroic Cowards," failed on an ode to "The Coward," and plunged into a sapphic called "The Pride of Sorrow." She had just added the sapphic to the feeble fire when her guests arrived.

The party, assembled in its entirety, consisted of Bruce Dalmores, triumphantly brandishing an iced piece of wood; Dimity, the pretty little dancer, who, in some miraculously legal way, disposed of a husband annually; Kenneth Linton, a cartoonist of some fame, always melancholy and morose; Millicent Webster, the novelist; and Ruth and Billie Trent, artist and illustrator, who quarreled constantly and made themselves superlatively disagreeable wherever they went, but could not exist apart from each other.

Jean admitted them frigidly, but ineffectually, with her greeting:

"I suppose you think I'm glad to see you, but I'm not."

"How can a natural—a *happy* woman be so cold to those who love her in a room that's at least twenty above zero?" marveled Billie Trent.

"You *don't* love me. You'd have the same passion for a cross-eyed Hindu if

she had a husband who bought wood for you to burn."

"Heaven divert her!" implored Ruth Trent fervently. "I *know* there's not a subject on earth that she can't manage to correlate that husband of hers *with it*!"

"Naturally *you* can't understand it—a woman without a spark of gratitude or affec——" Billie Trent began.

"Now don't you two hate vultures begin," Dimity promptly interrupted, arranging herself effectively on a fat stool almost inside the hearthplace. "I chose the place for this party. It's *my* party, and I'm going to personally conduct it. I *had* thought to spend my twenty-fifth"—she ignored the masculine ejaculations that this brought forth—"birthday evening in telling my troubles to the six people whom—I love best——"

"Don't include me!" Dalmores importuned her. "I *won't* be loved by you, even in a community affection."

"Oh, shut up, Brucie! You'll probably be the next one to marry me. I've been suspecting it for some time. But, as I was saying, since Jean seems really unstrung by our presence, I move we put aside our own desires and help her write a poem."

"Suits me," agreed Linton. "I ought to be able to help. I've got the very devil of a headache."

He settled himself solemnly in front of the fire at the feet of Millicent, whom he had adored ineffectually for three years, and who welcomed him with a sharp rap on his bald head from her knitting needle.

"What kind of a poem has it got to be, Jean?" she inquired.

"Love—the warmest possible—and *vers libre*," Dimity interjected before Jean could answer.

But Jean rebelled firmly, both at love and at *vers libre*. She wanted to do something with involved rhymings that should be vital and modern. But after

a lively discussion she was obliged to submit to *vers libre*, and after further argument—to love.

"How about inscribing it to the perfect husband? How many poems have you written to him, mother?" Dalmores asked, running through a little kodak book he had picked up from the bookshelves. "By Jove, you must have spent all your married life taking pictures of the creature!"

"Isn't he a dear?" said Jean softly, going to look over his arm. "I've never written a poem half good enough for him."

"Lord, I wish they cut out all wives after your pattern!" said Billie Trent with a certain wistfulness.

"Whoop! Don't speak—don't speak, Ruth!" Dimity adjured hastily, seeing Billie's wife about to make a tart response. "Let's begin the poem. Get your pencil, Jean. It's *my* party, so I'm going to name it. How do you like 'Lines Addressed to the Man I Love?' That sounds highbrow, don't you think?"

"Yes, I don't think!" agreed Linton disgustedly. "How do you expect us *fellows* to work up any fervor over such a title? And 'lines addressed' sounds like hell. Even *vers libre* couldn't stand for it. Suggest something human, Millicent."

"W-ell," mused Millicent, who was too essentially serious to comprehend submitting *anything* to an editor done wholly in a spirit of levity, "well, I suppose every person has really only *one* love in his life. You just sort of tack on your other affections to your one actual love. I think even Dimity will agree with me."

"Surely I do. I had my 'one' at sixteen. Think he's a hardware clerk now, but he's still *my* 'one,' though I guess he has half a dozen children and doesn't in the least suspect my claim on him. Oh, he was wonderful!" Dimity continued her reminiscing with increased



It was a very long poem; the entire bathtubful of wood was consumed before its completion.

abandon. "He could wiggle his ears and do most startling things with his finger joints. Oh, Jimmy was always the life of the party. I remember——"

"Don't! Wait and put it in the poem," Millicent interrupted. "We'll all put in things we remember about our *one* love. It really ought to be quite good."

"Well, you can sign somebody else's name to it," Jean declared, with a dampening lack of ardor. "I have no desire to be arrested by the post-office department for sending such stuff through the mails."

"You know it doesn't sound bad to me," Linton stated solemnly. "Tell you what I'll do, mother. You sign the thing, and if it doesn't sell by the third time you offer it, I'll pay you fifty dollars myself—and bail you out, if necessary. Let's get some chummy, intimate

little name for it. What's the matter with 'Do You Remember, Too?'"

There were objections. The consensus of male opinion was rather opposed to the "one" idea, the other two men having difficulty in adjusting any particular memory to any particular love. But Dimity at last succeeded in convincing them that the theory was at least plausible, and the poem began.

Ruth Trent contributed the first line: "O man of long ago—whom I love——"

"Rotten!" commented her husband. "Of course. Since it doesn't mean you. Your turn, Kenneth."

"Do pussy willows——" said Linton, deeply reflective.

"Go on. Finish it," Jean encouraged.

"It is finished. You gotta have short lines in *vers libre*, haven't you? It's up to Dalmores to finish it in the next line."



"But how the devil do I know what pussy willows remind *him* of?" objected Dalmores.

"You don't," comforted Linton. "Thank God for that! Put your own ideas of pussy willows on to it."

"Oh, very well. Since I don't recall any tender springtime passion about them, my line will have to be merely descriptive: Even uncouth false ones in Japanese shops——"

"Bring memories of our first kiss," continued Dimity blithely. "You know, they really *do*—to me."

"That long, half-fearful kiss——" from Jean.

"That never was another like——" chanted Millicent in turn.

"Oh, *hear!* The pussy willows *meow!*" finished Billie Trent with intense realism. "There! That gives a sort of 'ballad-dance' touch to it that no editor ever'll be able to resist."

This line, however, was indignantly rejected, and he was obliged to substitute, after the line, "That never was another like," the more conservative, yet inflexible finale of "Nor can be."

Then Jean read their achievement:

"O man of long ago—whom I love,  
Do pussy willows—  
Even uncouth false ones in Japanese shops—  
Bring memories of our first kiss,  
That long, half-fearful kiss,  
That never was another like  
Nor can be?"

As the poem progressed, it grew to include almost every natural phenomenon—the patter of rain on a tin roof, crickets chirping, the smell of clover fields and of cauliflower boiling, the crying and the laughter of the winds, the crowing of roosters, sunlight on water, wienerwursts. And Billie Trent even chronicled a most poignant passion that swept over him whenever he tipped over a bottle of ink.

It was a very long poem; the entire bathtubful of wood was consumed before its completion. Perhaps the lines

that proved to be of greatest import in Jean's future were the last ones, none of which were born of Jean's brain, but were the product of Dimity's and Dalmores' muse:

Do another's lips  
Sometimes  
Bring memories of mine?  
And another's arms  
Seem ever  
To leave a faint caress from me?

Oh, often in a crowd  
Where revel love and laughter,  
Often alone,  
I wonder  
Do you remember, too?

The poem was published. The editor wrote Jean a letter saying that it had seldom been his privilege to find such sincerity and depth of feeling portrayed with so great delicacy and realism. He was not alone in his opinion. During the month after the poem's publication, Jean received three somewhat startling letters, forwarded from her publisher, the first of which was from a man whose existence she had wholly forgotten:

MY DEAR LITTLE JEAN: Well, little girl, last evening I happened to run across your poem, "Do You Remember, Too?" So at last you realize your mistake. Oh, yes, I remember many of the things, but not all. I especially recall the pussy willows and your wild mood on that April day. But I must say I had forgotten the day you tipped over my inkwell. I only faintly remember it, now.

It flatters me a little, Jean—I confess it—to discover, as I say, that you have found I meant more to you than you thought. I had known a good many women before I knew you, my dear, and I realized that the feeling you had for me would never again come into your life for another man. Perhaps I should have been more insistent, but you will remember that it was never my nature to intrude myself.

I am exceedingly glad that you have been so successful with your writing. You are becoming really quite well known, even here in the East. Only the other evening, friends at dinner were discussing your work, and very favorably.



"Oh, Jean, little, happy Jean, how *could* you have done this to me, and then *sing* about it before every one who happens to read?"

Your surmise in the poem is correct. I *am* married. I was fortunate enough to win for my wife a daughter of Senator Phillips. She is, of course, a highly cultured and very charming woman, slightly older than yourself. However, as I used to tell you and as you now realize, the discrepancy in *our* ages, Jean, would have been no bar to our happiness. Though of course our lives are now irrevocably separated, I think it can do no harm to assure you that I can answer "yes" to the question in your poem. I think that sort of verse is called *vers libre*, isn't it? In cordial remembrance,

HOWARD LAWSON.

P. S.—By the way, I am often in New York. If by any chance you should come East, let me know. I might be able to arrange a little evening together.

The second letter came from the Middle West. It was written with green ink and many of the words were crossed out. The writing was scrawled as if by an impetuous, hasty pen:

O DEAREST JEAN: If you could only know the sorrow in my heart to-night, having read your poem in the last current number of *X Magazine*! I *knew* you loved me! I told you that you were too young to realize the depth of your own feelings. And now it is too late!

I judge from this that you have not married. For several years, I did not marry, holding you always in my heart. But finally, never hearing from you and despairing, I married a sweet girl who is a little like you. So it is too late. —We have three children.

But if you should like to see me, I think I could manage it somehow, although business is in a fearful way just now. Oh, Jean, that line—I mean those three lines—"Do another's lips sometimes bring memories of mine?" I could put my head down on my desk—and cry!

Write to me.

CLARENCE.

The third letter Jean answered, firmly, but kindly. The postmark was from Arizona. Unfortunately, the cauliflower reminiscence had been one of Arizona's experiences. It was too specific.

DEAR JEAN: My sister sent me your poem in the *X Magazine*. I guess you'd call it a poem. Since all the things you mention are memories between us two, I take it for granted that you had me in mind. Now I'm not a bit ashamed to tell you that I remember *everything*—too damned well for my own peace of mind. But I've always heard that the man you married after you thrw me over was a mighty decent chap. Now, Jean, you always were impulsive, and I think the thing for you to do is to make up your mind to be happy with him, for I suppose he loves you, the poor fool, just the way I do. It sort of looks to me as though it's your *job* to be true to the man you married.

My sister wrote me he has gone to France. If anything happens, you know, Jean, that you'll always have all the love I've got, and you can bank on me, no matter what comes. But if he comes back all right, I think you'd better play your game out. This darn' poem has certainly played the devil with me. As always,

JIM.

Jean showed these letters only to Millicent, feeling that it was not obligatory to share them with the other coauthors of the poem, since she had expended the entire amount of the check for "Do You Remember, Too?" in giving them a dinner to celebrate having *received* the check.

"Won't the perfect husband gloat over that poem?" Millicent often remarked. "I'm anxious to read what *he* writes about it. If it struck such a vibrant chord in all these other old *ashes*, it'll surely make *him* burst with happiness. And in such a perfectly splendid magazine, too! He'll be tickled to death that he let you take a

studio this winter and prove what you could do."

But Millicent was mistaken. She never saw Paul's letter, and she never knew the real reason for Jean's sudden, intense passion for Y. M. C. A. canteen work. For Paul's letter required no advice or comment from friends. It was an amazingly lucid epistle:

DEAR JEAN: This morning, after two sleepless days and nights working over hundreds of these poor devils, I happened to pick up *X Magazine* in a Y. M. C. A. hut while I was waiting for a bite to eat, and I stumbled on your poem. I am in no mood to discuss it now. Besides, it does not seem to warrant discussion. The thing has too sincere, too *real* a ring, not to be true.

Of course I knew you had loved other men, but I supposed, like a damn' fool, that I was the *one*, which I so evidently am not. You can perhaps imagine how I feel this morning, but I want you to know that I'm through—through. If he is that cattleman that came to see you once in California, I advise your making arrangements—any way you like—to go back to him. Oh, Jean, little, happy Jean, *how could* you have done this to me, and then *sing* about it before every one who happens to read? And here is your letter of three weeks ago. Well, I wish you happiness with your *one* love and your studio.

PAUL.

Unhesitatingly, unregretfully, upon receipt of this, three more Belgian babies were deserted in order that a highly extravagant and not exactly military cable might wing its way to Paul:

I abominate studios, you dearest idiot! Coming over with the next Y. M. C. A. canteen contingent to be nearer the one man.

That morning, on her way to send the cable, and thence to the Y. M. C. A. building, as Jean was running down the stairs of the Success Studios, Dalmores called after her:

"Wait a minute! I'll go with you. Saw you got a letter from the perfect husband this morning. How is he?"

Jean did not stop.

"He's a perfect fool—but I love him. See you later."

# *The Heel of Achilles*

By S. N. Behrman

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

How one girl found the heel "by not looking so awfully hard." A delightful love story.

BECAUSE, ever since he had been twenty-two years old, Stark Manning had had perfectly white hair, he had always considered himself more or less detached from the ordinary amusements of boys and girls. Not that his white hair made him unattractive; in fact, it gave him rather a distinguished look, and the girls all thought Stark awfully nice looking, though somewhat remote and a bit too scholarly in his interests. But by sheer auto-suggestion, Manning had come to think of himself as an old man for whom youth was somehow not intended to be the gift it was for other people. He thought of the boys and girls of his own age as if they were æons younger than he was, and they, in turn, began to think of him as æons older than they. And so, after a time, they took no notice of him, and would no more have thought of inviting him to join in their sports than they would have thought of asking their grandfathers.

He was known as "old Manning." "Nice chap, isn't he, old Manning?" And, "Oh, there goes old Manning. Off to his books, I suppose. I'm glad I'm young and thoughtless, instead of old and learned. How old is old Manning, anyway?"

And if the inquirer was informed that old Manning was not much over thirty, he would whistle and express the profoundest surprise.

Sometimes Manning would appear at dances, dance once or twice with his mother or one of his aunts, stare idly

around, become nervous, walk about abstractedly, meet an aspiring mother with an aspiring daughter—the Manning fortune had a shining reputation—he gently persuaded into dancing with the aspiring daughter by the ditto mother, and wonder miserably, while he was doing it, why he had ever allowed himself to be "dragged out of his shell," as his mother and sister called it. And of course he would step all over the poor girl's expensive dancing slippers, and be quite wretched about it, and regret the evening he had lost away from his books.

For Manning, having all the money that certain people who don't care about money manage to have, spent his time in writing. And you'd never guess what it was that Manning was writing. Not plays—he was original that way—or stories. He didn't even make free with verse. Manning was engaged upon no less a work than a history of the literature of confessions. Which, little as you may suspect it, is no small job. You have heard of, or perhaps even read, St. Augustine and Rousseau. But do you know Pellico and Gissing and Amiel and De Guérin and Pattison and De Goncourt and St. Theresa and Casanova and De Musset and Leopardi and Cellini? You probably don't. But Manning knew them all, and a great many more that even I don't know. There are a great many more. When Manning had started, he had thought that his book would be in one volume, or at most two or three. But as he got

into it, he found that it would be larger than he had dreamed—seven volumes, perhaps ten. And it would be so expensive that you'd have to be almost as rich as Manning to be able to buy it.

You may think that this is not a very exciting thing for a rich, rather distinguished-looking young man of thirty-two to be doing, but Manning found it as thrilling as other young men find girls and motors and musical comedy. Manning, having plenty of money to spend, spent it on manuscripts. He ransacked the book shops of two continents; he chased old editions across the ocean. He had worked in the world's greatest libraries—the Bodleian at Oxford, the Vatican in Rome, and the British Museum. But since the war started, he had been forced to content himself with the meager million or so volumes that are to be found in the public library at Forty-second Street in New York. Manning grumbled a bit, but succumbed to his fate. Which made possible Manning's story. It is altogether probable that if there had been no war, Manning would never have had a story. Unless there are girls like Ellen Southard in London or Rome or Oxford. Which is altogether improbable.

If Manning were in the habit of noticing girls—which he decidedly wasn't—he would have observed that the young lady who handed him his pile of books every evening from behind the carved inclosure in the great reference room was a very comely young person, with deliciously brown hair and mischievous eyes with an unquenchable gleam of humor in them. But he didn't. He only noticed that she was rather intelligent and never gave him the wrong editions of things. Library people often irritated him because they didn't seem to suspect that one edition of a book isn't exactly like another.

But though Manning didn't notice the young lady, the young lady noticed

Manning. In fact, she knew all about Manning. For one thing, she knew that he was the chief anxiety of his mother's life. For in the daytime, when she wasn't giving out books at the library, the young lady was writing letters and being generally useful to Mrs. Manning. She was, in fact, that lady's social secretary. And several hours each day she listened sympathetically while Mrs. Manning told her what a trial—what a very great trial indeed—her son Stark was to her. It was one of the best things Ellen did.

It bothered Mrs. Manning dreadfully that her son wasn't married and having children. For he was an only son, and the name of Manning was an old name and very dear to Mrs. Manning. Did any woman, she would ask Ellen on an average of once a day, ever have such a son as Stark? Fiddling away with books when he ought to be supplying the world with little Mannings! It was, she asserted, dreadful. It was not, she assured Ellen, proper. What would her dear husband have thought? She had reasoned with Stark, argued with him, pleaded even. No use. He didn't seem to care about girls. He didn't seem to realize his responsibility. He didn't care about anything but those old books of his. What did Ellen suppose was in the old books, anyway?

Ellen, who had looked into one of Manning's books one night before he had come for them, had an idea of what was in them, but she didn't tell Mrs. Manning.

Mrs. Manning had even gone to a medium—which is what a fortune teller becomes when she charges prices that only rich people can pay—about Stark. She had told the medium, who was very fashionable that season and saw only the best people, that she had an only son with celibate tendencies and bookish tastes who was a great grief to her because he wasn't married. Would he ever marry, and when?

The medium had obligingly gone into a trance, during which she had communication with a fishmonger who had lived in the third century. This remarkably prescient fishmonger described a scene in which he saw a plump baby sitting on a nursery floor tearing a huge manuscript to pieces. The manuscript was almost as plump as the baby. Very soon entered a tall young man with white hair. When he saw what the baby was doing, he became very angry, but after a time a pretty, golden-haired girl came in and kissed him, and the young man's anger disappeared.

Here the fishmonger grew reticent and spoke no more. But Mrs. Manning was enormously relieved. She took the vision as a good omen. It was a symbol of a marital future for her son. For a long time she took solace, but as the months passed and Stark kept closer to his books than ever, this comfort faded.

In her rôle of chief comforter to the troubled dowager, Ellen assured Mrs. Manning constantly that there was sure to come a day when it would dawn upon Stark, with the suddenness of a lightning flash, that life was more important

Sometimes Manning would appear at dances, dance once or twice with his mother or one of his aunts, stare idly around, become nervous, walk about abstractedly, and regret the evening he had lost away from his books.



—and more fun—than books. In other words, it was certain that some day Stark would fall in love. The trouble was that he hadn't met the right girl—that was all. And since Mrs. Manning had the greatest confidence in Ellen's judgment in all departments of life, she took comfort in that assurance. So much so that when she made up her mind that Kirsteen Schreiner, who had



just come to town from Paris—via Butte, Montana, where resided her father—was *the* girl for Stark, and that he simply must marry her, she decided that Ellen was the only person on earth who could help her make Stark do it.

To Mrs. Manning's credit it must be said that she involved Ellen in her matrimonial scheme for her son only when all other devices had completely failed her, and to Ellen's that she was enlisted in it entirely without her knowledge. It came about in this way. Mrs. Manning had tried every way she knew to get her son to meet Kirsteen Schreiner. But he had told her gently, but firmly that his work had reached such a stage that he couldn't spare a minute away from it. Besides, he was having, he said, great trouble with secretaries. By dint of much coaxing, however, she finally got him to promise to come to a small dinner she had arranged for Kirsteen.

Mrs. Manning gave a sigh of relief. There was that done, anyway. But her joy was short-lived. Manning did not appear at the dinner. And the next day, when she came to scold him, he told her that his secretary had taken it into her head to get married the day before and that, in his annoyance, he had forgotten all about the dinner. Followed a tirade from Stark on the general subject of secretaries. They were unreliable. They had no idea of scholarship. They had a tendency to haziness when it came to spelling words over two syllables in length. They were eternally talking over the telephone, making what they called "dates." They got married. To all of which Mrs. Manning listened soothingly. She had long ago learned to humor her son. Besides, she had just got an idea, a perfectly stunning idea. Already she saw her son married to Kirsteen Schreiner.

"I know a secretary," she said calmly, "who *can* spell and *is* well educated and *is* reliable."

Stark sniffed. In fact he disgruntledly voiced the skepticism of the rustic when he first beheld the giraffe.

"But there *is*, Stark," denied Mrs. Manning. "I have her. She's all that a secretary should be and more. And you shall have her."

"Who is she?"

"Her name is Ellen Southard. She's a jewel, Stark. She knows simply *everything*."

"That's just the kind of secretary I don't want, thank you. I've had three omniscient ones already. After this, I'll try specialists."

Mrs. Manning ignored her son's irony.

"Wait till you see her, Stark," was all she said. "I want you to know it's a real sacrifice for me to give her up. I don't know how I shall get on without her."

"It's only for a while now, just to tide me over a rush of work. I'm really hard up for one, mater."

"Very well. You may borrow Ellen until you get another. But on one condition."

"What?"

"That you never, never as long as you live, Stark, break an engagement I make for you again."

Stark promised meekly.

"To make up, you must be especially nice to Kirsteen after this."

Stark promised to be nice, and asked when this Ellen girl would be ready to begin work.

"I'll send her to you this afternoon, Stark," said Mrs. Manning. She turned on her way to the door. "Oh, by the way, I'm arranging an opera party for Wednesday—your sister and Ellis Baird, Miss Schreiner, Mr. Schreiner, and myself. Can we count on you?"

"It depends on whether this girl you're sending me has a slight conception of the rudiments of English."

"She knows everything, Stark," said

Mrs. Manning tranquilly, and went to the library to tell Ellen that she had a new job.

Ellen didn't really like the idea at all. In the first place, she was one of those nice girls who persist in being old-fashioned in their literary tastes. She had looked into one of Manning's books at the library one night and it had made her blush. She was the kind of girl who doesn't like to read Maupassant, who loves Dickens and "Alice in Wonderland," and who thinks psychoanalysis—what she knows of it—"horrid." She protested to Mrs. Manning that she was the last person in the world to help Stark in his work. To which Mrs. Manning replied that since she, Ellen, knew everything, it must therefore follow that she knew whatever it was that Stark was bothering about. Mrs. Manning's confidence in Ellen's attainments was unshakable. For her part, she hadn't the faintest idea of what Stark was doing and didn't care. Mrs. Manning's interest in books stopped at their bindings, of which, by the way, she had some beautiful examples, which she showed people together with her Sèvres.

"It isn't Stark's work I am thinking of," admitted Mrs. Manning.

"Then why do you want me to be his secretary?" asked Ellen.

"There are many reasons," replied Mrs. Manning mysteriously. "In the first place, unless I get him a competent secretary, he'll never get through this silly work he's doing. Which means that he'll never marry. In the second place, I need your help."

"But what can I do?"

"You can help me get him to marry Kirsteen Schreiner."

"But what can I do?"

"That will come later."

"Really, Mrs. Manning, I don't see how I can——"

"You don't know how much I appreciate your doing this for me, Ellen. Tell me—how is your dear mother?"

Ellen said that her mother, who was a confirmed invalid, was just about the same, thank you.

"Really, my dear," continued Mrs. Manning, "you don't know how worried I am about Stark. I'm perfectly sure that if he doesn't marry Kirsteen, he'll never marry at all. This is his last chance. You can tell Kirsteen what tastes to cultivate. You can help her in ever so many ways. You will do it, won't you, dear—for me?"

Of course Ellen said that she would. You never could refuse Mrs. Manning—not when she patted your shoulder in that fluttering way of hers and smiled down at you out of her kindly blue eyes.

So that afternoon at two, Ellen, armed with pad and pencil—the latter stuck at a pert angle into her hair—rapped timidly at Stark Manning's study door, on the other side of the house from the room where she habitually worked for Mrs. Manning. There was no answer. She rapped again. There was a muffled and impatient "Come in! Come in!"

Ellen went in. An old-looking young man with white hair was bent over a book, taking notes. But he rose after a moment, motioned Ellen to a chair near his desk, and waited for her to sit down.

"My mother tells me," he began, eyeing her fixedly, "that you know everything. I've had three secretaries who were similarly endowed. I discharged the last but one because her spelling, though quaint, was unconventional. She found it utterly impossible to reconcile herself to the 'p' in psychology."

"I'm very tractable in these matters," said Ellen demurely, without smiling.

Stark shot her a swift, suspicious look, which Ellen met solemnly.

"Another thing," he said abruptly, "do you draw?"

"Why, no. Mrs. Manning didn't tell me——"

"Good! One of your predecessors



He only noticed that she was rather intelligent and never gave him the wrong edition of things.

devoted her leisure minutes to sketching portraits of myself in her notebook, portraits intended to be comic."

"And were they?" Ellen caught herself too late. It was said.

Manning looked at her a moment without replying. Ellen held her breath. Suddenly a gleam came into his eyes, and his mouth curved at the corners.

"They ought to have been. There were indubitable possibilities in the model. But the execution was faulty."

The curve at the mouth corner ripened into a full-grown smile. Ellen laughed outright. She liked Stark Manning.

After a few minutes' chat, it occurred to Manning that he had seen Ellen somewhere before.

"Yes," said Ellen. "You have seen me before. I should say—at a conservative estimate—about four hundred times."

"Really? But where could it possibly——"

"At the New York Public Library—main branch—third floor on your right."

"Are you the young woman who's been giving me books?"

Ellen admitted it.

"But I thought you were mother's secretary?"

"Only in the daytime."

"And you work evenings in the library! Really, Miss—er—Southard, I must congratulate you on your industry."

"It's not industry," said Ellen crisply. "It's necessity."

Stark leaned forward eagerly.

"Perhaps you know something of what I'm doing?"

"Very little. Though I've peeped into your books from time to time."

"Which ones?"

"The last one was the 'Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle.'"

"Good heavens, girl," cried Stark, "you don't mean to tell me that you can read French!"

Ellen could. French had been one of her "majors" at Smith. Right then was close sealed the friendship of Stark Manning, millionaire bibliophile, and Ellen Southard, secretary.

One sunny November afternoon, about three weeks later, Kirsteen Schreiner breezed airily into Manning's study, where Ellen was working alone, perched on a corner of Manning's desk, dangled her silk-stockinged, slender feet, and lit a cigarette. Ellen changed sheets on her typewriter.

"So this," remarked Kirsteen, "is where the beast works?"

"Yes."

"Well, then—begin. My mother and Mrs. Manning sent me in here to you to get some fine points. I've known Stark nearly a month now, and I haven't made very much progress. Guess I'll have to learn more about him, so I can attack him where he's most vulnerable. The heel of Achilles, as it were. What's his favorite drink? Does he prefer blondes or brunettes? Does he like girls who talk or girls who keep quiet? How does he like 'em to dress? Does he like 'em simple or sophisticated, demure or devilish? You measure the specifications, Miss Southard, and I'll live up to 'em. I know all the tricks—learned 'em in Paris."

Ellen, a bit bewildered, looked up at Kirsteen. But there was a friendly gleam in the girl's eyes that put her

at ease. A sense of humor is the great leavener.

"But I'm quite serious, Miss Southard," Kirsteen went on. "Mother wants me to marry Stark, and I'm quite willing to do it. I've always wanted to marry a bookish man, and Stark would make a very nice husband, I think. He's so harmless. He wouldn't interfere with me. But it's a bit difficult to interest him. We went to the opera last night. It was the first time we'd been alone together so we could really talk."

"What did you talk about? If you don't mind——"

"Of course not, That's what I'm here for—sort of a consultation. Well, I know he's very studious, so I told him about my studies in boarding school. To impress him, I told him I was crazy about botany."

"Did it?"

"It didn't exactly floor him. He said he didn't know the difference between an orchid and a dandelion himself. And after that I told him a lot of funny stories. But he didn't laugh much."

"Did you talk about books?"

"Yes. I told him about some novels I'd been reading. He'd never even heard of the authors, though I thought he knew all about books, and he didn't seem to care much for the plots. I'm at my wits' end for conversation, and you really have to help me out, Miss Southard."

Ellen thought a moment.

"I have it!" she said finally.

"I knew you'd think of something," said Kirsteen gratefully.

"As far as I can make out, Mr. Manning isn't interested in a single thing in the world just now but this book he's writing. Now if you could talk to him about that——"

"What's it about?"

"It's a history of confessions."

"Funny thing to be writing about!" commented Kirsteen.

"I was thinking that if I just made

out a list of the more interesting authors for you, with a little comment on each one—when they lived and so forth—so you could tell them apart, that would be all you'd need. You'd just have to mention their names to get him started. Mr. Manning is so enthusiastic about them that I'm sure he would do the rest."

Kirsteen slid off the desk, extinguished her cigarette, and threw it into the ash tray.

"My dear," she said, "I'm ever so grateful to you. Your suggestion relieves me enormously. I appreciate it so much that if I land him, I'll name the first baby after you—if we have one."

Ellen blushed and began to typewrite furiously.

"I'll give you the list in the morning," she said. "You'll just have to learn it."

"It's now or never," said Kirsteen. "There's going to be a house party at the Gruinings' next week. If I don't get him there, I'll never get him at all. So long, Miss Southard, and thanks awfully."

And the slender young native of Butte, who smoked her cigarettes with the grace of an experienced boulevardier, left the room to tell Mrs. Manning that the Southard girl was a precious jewel worth her weight in gold.

When Mrs. Manning spoke to Stark about the week-end at the Gruinings', he hemmed and hawed and said he would think it over, which meant that he had no intention of going. A few days later, Mrs. Manning called Ellen to her room.

"I want you to help me get Stark to come to the Gruinings' on Friday," she began. "He told me he was head over heels in work and that he couldn't leave just now. Then he started telling me what a pleasure it was to work with you, so I suggested that you come out

to the Gruinings' with us. He seemed to like the idea."

"But I couldn't do that, Mrs. Manning!" protested Ellen.

"Why not, child? It's the only condition under which Stark would consent to come. We might as well humor him. Besides, the country air would do you lots of good. You're pale, child—you've been working altogether too hard. I cautioned Stark against giving you too much to do. He said if you came out to the Gruinings' with us, he'd give you only a few hours' work each morning and you could have the rest of the day to yourself."

"I'll see if I can't persuade him to go without me. We can arrange the work in advance, so I'll have enough to do over the week-end."

"I don't think you'll succeed. Stark is so stubborn. By the way, Ellen, haven't you noticed a change in Stark?"

"In what way?"

"Don't you think he's become—well—more debonair, less seedy? Pays more attention to his clothes, don't you think? Flower in his buttonhole—whistles occasionally—that sort of thing."

"Yes," admitted Ellen. "I had noticed it."

"What do you think causes it?"

"I don't know," said Ellen. "What do you think?"

Mrs. Manning shot Ellen a shrewd look without stopping work on the muffler she was knitting.

"The east wind, perhaps," commented Mrs. Manning. "Remember, child," she added, "I want you to come out to the Gruinings'."

"He's in love already with Kirsteen Schreiner," said Ellen to herself on the way to Stark's room, "and Mrs. Manning knows it."

Stark looked up from his work as she came in.

"Oh, there you are!" he said. "I was wondering what had become of you."



"So this," remarked Kirsteen, "is where the beast works?"

"I was talking to your mother."

"I was afraid you'd run away—got married or something."

"Never fear," laughed Ellen.

"But I do. It's my constant dread that I'll lose you."

"Don't worry, Mr. Manning. The knights-errant are not storming my citadel."

"Then all I can say is that the knights-errant are tremendous fools."

"Thank you, Mr. Manning!"

"The mater speak to you about the Gruinings' house party?" he asked after a moment.

"Yes. I told her you would be able to go because I'd take some work home with me over Sunday."

"Oh, did you? It's very nice of you to tell my mother things like that. But let me assure you that I won't go to the Gruinings'. Not unless you come with me."

"But you don't really need me. You can tell me what to do in advance——"

"I have spoken! Either you go to the Gruinings' or I stay right here."

"You are tyrannical," said Ellen.

For a long time there was a silence between them. Suddenly Stark straightened and wheeled in his chair, facing her.

"Miss Southard," he said abruptly, "do I look *very* old?"

For a moment she did not answer; she was so taken aback by the question.



"Don't be afraid to tell me just what you think," he added.

"I really can't answer that question," said Ellen finally. "You see, I know exactly how old you really are."

"Mater tell you?"

"Yes."

"But doesn't this"—he touched his white hair—"make me look frightfully—antique?"

"No. Not over thirty-five at the most."

"Really?"

"Why, yes."

He paused reflectively.

"You see," he began, "I've always thought of myself somehow as terrifically old. I've kept away from a good many things because I thought I was too old for 'em. Thought I'd look ridiculous doing 'em. And I had to do something, so I began work on this. Fortunately I found it frightfully interesting. But I've come to realize—lately—that I've missed lots of things that I needn't have missed at all. And I'm wondering whether it isn't too late for 'em, whether I'm not too much of an old fogey."

It flashed through Ellen's head that he was thinking of Kirsteen Schreiner.

"That's foolish," she said. "No one thinks of you as old."

"Don't you?"

"Why, no. Of course not. Nor any one else."

"Of whom are you thinking?"

"Only the other day, I was talking to a friend of yours who told me she thought you played at being old to frighten bores away."

"Who told you that?"

"Miss Schreiner."

Now Miss Schreiner hadn't. But Ellen thought it would do no harm to say she had.

"Do you see Miss Schreiner much?" asked Stark, a quizzical smile playing about his lips.

"Once in a while," said Ellen.

"Do you talk to her about my work?"

"Not particularly," lied Ellen. "Why?"

"I thought possibly you'd spoken to her about what I'm doing. We were together last night, and she started—rather irrelevantly, I thought—to reel off a lot of information about some of the men I'm writing about. In the middle, though, she got confused and began mixing things dreadfully. Sounded as if she had learned something by rote and had forgotten her cue in the midst of it. It was really quite amusing. Wonder where she got it."

Ellen felt herself turning red to the roots of her hair, but she did not say a word. Instead, she bent low over her work and did not look up again till he began giving her his usual dictation, about an hour later. Ellen felt decidedly uncomfortable; she wished it were time for her to go home.

He had been reading aloud to her for about ten minutes, when his voice stopped unaccountably, in the middle of a paragraph. Ellen looked up inquiringly, to find his gaze directed full at her. She felt herself flushing again, though she hated herself for doing it. To cover her embarrassment, she repeated the last word he had dictated to her, under the pretense that he had lost the place in his notes.

And these were the words: "The instinct of man to share with the world the story of his loves——"

Ellen paused for him to go on.

"Is part of his burning desire to immortalize his loved ones—whether these be ideas or women," continued Stark slowly.

Ellen wrote it, but Stark stopped again. This time Ellen, for some reason, did not look up, but waited, pencil poised, for him to continue. She was conscious of some strange, electric tension between them, entirely new.

"I don't know how I wrote that," he said. "It's so true. And when I

wrote it, I knew so little about it. That's the funny part of it. But it strikes me now—now that I've learned."

Why was he speaking to her this way? To her?

"I wish you *would* come out to the Gruinings," he said quietly.

Ellen replied matter-of-factly; at least she hoped it sounded that way.

"There's no real need of it," she heard herself saying. "You can give me enough work to last over till you come back."

"But I wasn't thinking of the work. I was thinking of you. Yes—of you. I'd like to see you out in the open, or romping about in some wood under thick green trees, with the sun filtering through and touching the gold in your hair."

She could hardly realize that he was speaking this way to her. She wanted to do something to stop him; somehow or other it made her feel as if she had done something deliberately wrong.

"Mother's told me about you," he was saying, "how hard you work, what you're doing for your young brother, and how you've always taken care of your mother. I want you to know that I think it's wonderful and brave of you. Mother is terribly fond of you, and I—I love you."

He had said it. Ellen did not know why, but she felt tears starting to her eyes.

"Please," she begged, "I don't want you to!"

"You're angry with me. I know I shouldn't have said it so—suddenly. But it's so long since I've had anything to do with girls that I didn't know how to lead up to it—gradually. And you're the first person who's ever made me feel this way. I've had no experience—I—"

His voice trailed off wistfully, and he reached over and put his hand on hers.

"But I don't—we hardly know each other—and—and—"

"And what?" he prompted kindly.

She thought suddenly, fearfully, of Kirsteen Schreiner, of Mrs. Manning.

"And everything," was all she could say. "Please, Mr. Manning, don't speak to me this way again."

He saw the look of genuine pleading in her eyes.

"I'm sorry," he said sincerely. "Awfully sorry. And if you'll forgive me this time, I promise never, never to do it again."

"Thank you," said Ellen.

There was a long silence. And then, in his usual dry, even voice, Stark spoke again.

"Let's see," he said. "Where were we? Oh, yes—'The instinct of man to share with the world the story of his loves is part of his burning desire to immortalize his loved ones—whether these be ideas or women.'"

His voice droned on, and Ellen's pencil, impelled by some wonderful new rhythm, wrote what he said, though she did not hear the words.

But in the next twenty-four hours, Ellen Southard went through an agony of self-condemnation. She felt herself a traitor to Mrs. Manning, to Kirsteen Schreiner, to every one in the world. For years Mrs. Manning had befriended her in a thousand ways; in spite of some of her idiosyncrasies, Ellen was fonder of Mrs. Manning than of any one else in the world except her own mother. Mrs. Manning had asked her to become Stark's new secretary in order to help her make him fall in love with Kirsteen Schreiner. Instead, she had made him fall in love with herself. It was true that she had been entirely passive in the matter, but that is not the way it would look to other people, particularly to Mrs. Manning. She knew it would never be possible for her to convince Mrs. Manning or any one else that she had done nothing to lure Stark into an expression of his feeling for her. It was only a vagrom im-

pulse on his part, anyway, she felt sure; the best thing she could do would be to sever her relations with the Manning household. Perhaps, after Stark was married to Kirsteen, she could go back, and Mrs. Manning and she could resume their old friendship.

That night Ellen slept very little. She had told her mother nothing of her decision to leave Mrs. Manning, not wishing to worry her before it was absolutely necessary. When she arose the next morning, her duty seemed clear to her. She would not go back to Mrs. Manning at all; they would expect her to go to the Gruinings' with them and, under the circumstances, that was of course impossible. She felt that she could not bear to meet Mrs. Manning's gaze, to say nothing of Kirsteen's. So she sat down and wrote Mrs. Manning a note which she mailed at once:

DEAR MRS. MANNING: I am sorry to have to write to you that I can no longer continue as your secretary and that I must also terminate the temporary work I am doing for your son. I cannot even tell you my reason for doing this.

I can only say that I shall never forget the kindness you have always shown to mother and me. I can only wish that I had better repaid it. Sincerely yours,

ELLEN SOUTHARD.

The letter mailed, Ellen kissed her mother and, without telling her what she had done, went downtown to make the weary round of the employment offices. For a week she did this—going, of course, to the library in the evenings—before she got another position. This was as secretary for the vice president of a corporation for the manufacture of glue in Long Island City, a gentleman who wore spats and a red necktie and looked at Ellen as a hungry glutton looks at a menu card in a restaurant. Ellen would come home at night weary and disgusted to her soul. She had never heard from either Stark or Mrs. Manning in reply to her note.

"I guess they've decided I'm not

worth bothering with," said Ellen to herself. "And I don't blame them, either."

And then one night, about a month later, Stark Manning appeared at the library, a few minutes before closing time, and asked whether he might see her home. He looked white-faced and rather grim, Ellen thought. She told him to meet her at ten o'clock. When she came downstairs, she found him waiting for her at the Forty-second Street entrance. His car was waiting and, without a word, he helped her in and told the chauffeur to drive to her home.

They talked very little in the few minutes they were together in the car. Ellen asked how Mrs. Manning was, and Stark said that she was very well. That was all.

But in the vestibule of the apartment house where Ellen lived, Stark faced her grimly. She had never seen him look that way before; it frightened her a bit.

"I'm not going to apologize for rushing in on you like this," he began, "because, if it comes to apologies, it seems to me you owe me one. But I just had to come to find out why you ran away from us the way you did. Mother simply couldn't understand it. But I told her yesterday what happened the day before you left. She sent me to tell you that if you ran away on my account, you could return to do your old work for her. I won't trouble you. I'll take rooms of my own downtown. You'll never see me."

She averted her eyes from his steady gaze.

"I wish you wouldn't talk this way," she said in a choked voice. "You make me feel so—guilty."

"But why should you feel guilty? It's I who feel guilty. Guilty for speaking to you the way I did when all the while you were in love with some one else."

She looked up at him in astonishment.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Mother's told me," he said.

"Told you what?"

"That you are engaged—to be married."

"But how could she?" exclaimed Ellen. "I'm not any such thing! Nor do I intend to be. I don't understand how——"

"Don't you?" His voice changed suddenly. "That is exactly what I thought. Still, I wanted to make sure. Now, young woman, I'm going to take this affair into my own hands. I want you to tell me exactly why you left us in that unpardonable way."

"Why, I——"

"No stammering. Better tell the truth right out. I warn you it's the best thing for you. Besides, I think I know without your telling me. Isn't it because you thought mother wanted me to marry Kirsteen Schreiner? And for lots of other reasons equally silly and preposterous? You needn't answer. I know it was. And since I'm sure now that you don't love any one else, I take the liberty of informing you that you are going to marry me. This is definite. I don't intend to argue with you about it. I'm not even going to repeat what I've told you before—that I love you."

But he did something else, and Ellen couldn't stop him.

"But, Stark," she finally managed to protest, "what will your mother say?"

"Mother! Pshaw! The old schemer!"

"Stark! How can you?"

"Why, she planned the whole thing. She says she knew that if she let you become my secretary and told me to marry some one else, I'd be sure to marry you."

"Then she doesn't want you——"

"She doesn't want me to marry any one but you. And she says she'll be very angry if you don't have me. Now what do you say?"

"I don't want to offend your mother," said Ellen softly.

And Stark did it again.

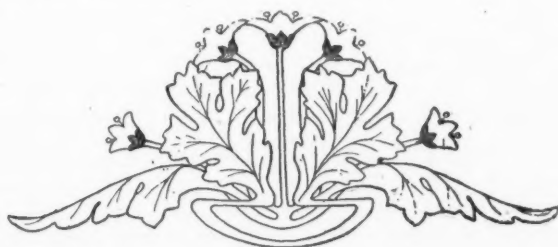
Several weeks later, after the announcement of Ellen's engagement to Stark Manning, she got a characteristic note from Kirsteen Schreiner:

DEAR MISS SOUTHARD: How *did* you do it? I swear it's a mystery to me how you managed. I got so tired of looking for the heel of Achilles that I began to think this particular Achilles didn't have any heel. How did you find it? I'll have to learn your method. Just now, though, I'm having better luck with a youth from London. Title and all that sort of thing. And, my dear, he's *all* heel. My best to Stark. Devotedly,

KIRSTEEN SCHREINER.

"Perhaps," said Ellen to herself, as she laughed over this letter; "I have found the heel of Achilles by not looking so awfully hard."

But she didn't say that in the note of thanks she promptly sent to Miss Schreiner.





Author of "Abandoning the Home," "Does Recreation Recreate?" etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

The tea-table group discusses the benefits of war upon the household.

I AM truly ashamed to confess it," admitted the young woman whom the tea-table group would always regard as the bride, despite the fact that she had been for some years deserving the staid title of matron, "but it looks as though the war were going to make us richer instead of poorer."

"Is Harry by any chance a munitions maker, unbeknownst to us?" asked the hostess, turning a heel with neatness and dispatch.

"It isn't Harry, it's me," answered the bride ungrammatically.

"You a munitions maker!" cried Madame Cræsus, looking up from her gray helmet and speaking, not with jocularity, for she was not given to lightness, but with the astonishment of the literal-minded.

"No, of course not. I mean that I'm the one who is making us richer instead of poorer. By saving, you know. Oh, of course I don't suppose that we are literally any richer than we were. But

we are spending so much less on our provisions——"

"What?" cried Madame Cræsus. "Why, the butcher——"

"Yes, but I see very little of the butcher these days," interrupted the bride decisively. "And that is what I mean. For the first time since I began keeping house, I'm actually using intelligence instead of tradition and habit——doesn't that sound like the doctor, though?" she broke off to ask, in self-admiration—"intelligence instead of tradition and habit in planning our meals. And the result is that we are really well nourished on less than we used to pay, in spite of the soaring cost of foodstuffs."

"I don't see how you do it," protested Madame Cræsus. "My housekeeper has had her table allowance increased three times since last April, and she told me the other day that she didn't think she could make the present one suffice much longer."

"Your housekeeper," insisted the bride, evidently delighted with her recent essay in verbal nicety, "is doubtless using tradition and habit in planning your meals. Tell us, honestly, doesn't she give you about the same kind of food she always has?"

"Oh, we signed the food-administration pledge," replied Madame Cræsus virtuously. "We never have more than three courses for dinner. Sometimes a little fruit to begin, or an oyster or a clam, or a few bonbons to end; but they don't really count, I think. A course," she went on definitely, authoritatively, "always seems to me to have more than one part—meat and vegetables, you know, or salad and cheese, or soup and rolls. When there's only one thing, I don't call it a course. And so we have only three courses these days. If a soup, then no salad; or if both soup and salad, then no dessert. Oh, we've been very conscientious," she ended in self-approval.

"The other night, when we dined with you," began the grandmother a little reproachfully, "you certainly had five courses——"

"Oh, but that was a company dinner!" Madame Cræsus justified herself. "And I don't call an oyster cocktail a course. I don't think it is fair."

"What interests me," observed the débutante tactfully, steering the talk away from the troubled waters of the interpretation of the food pledge by the wealthy, "is what the bride means by her statement, and how she manages to save enough to keep even with mounting prices."

"I'll tell you," said the bride delightedly. "I've really been making a study of all those dreary tables—tables that used to seem dreary," she corrected herself—"about proteids and carbohydrates and calories——"

"Oh, domestic science!" groaned the débutante. "But I, for one, haven't got the time to take a course——"

"Neither did I take a course," interjected the narrator of one way of thrift. "I merely wrote to the agricultural department in Washington for a list of their publications on food problems, and when I received the list, I studied it and wrote for the bulletins I wanted. I've always been duly grateful to my country," she went on happily, "for the blessings of freedom and equality and all that; but I was perfectly amazed to find out how much concrete stuff I, as a simple housewife, had to be thankful for! I love my land more than ever because of its bulletin on the uses of cheese!

"You needn't laugh," she added, half resentfully, as a shout greeted this statement. "I mean it. I think it's perfectly wonderful—and I don't care if it does sound silly—that one's government not only fixes up tariffs and Panama Canals and foreign treaties, but gets right down to brass tacks and helps the housekeeper in a Harlem flat use up her sour milk to the best advantage; and that it not only tells people to conserve wheat for the army and the Allies, but gets out a leaflet on cornmeal to tell them how to do it! I think it's wonderful and splendid that the agricultural schools connected with our State universities will send any woman all the information they have acquired by experiment on food growing and food preparing and food saving. And the way in which I have economized successfully, if I do say it myself, is by getting into intimate, domestic relations with my government! I've taken my course in domestic science right here at home, with departmental publications and university publications for my textbooks.

"A calorie has no terror for me any longer. I know how many calories a day a person of Harry's age, weight, and occupation needs, and what foods contain those calories! I know what needs to be added to or subtracted from





"No," answered the doctor decisively, "it doesn't seem a waste of time at all. I never give up making an incision or dressing a wound to knit!"

his requirements for his father and my mother or my sister's little girl when they come to visit us. Or, if I don't know it offhand, I know exactly where, in my neatly indexed file of publications, to lay my hands on it. I know how to get protein into our systems without the butcher's bill being a terror to lie awake over. I know how to make that protein palatable to tastes accustomed to meat, by the addition of meat gravies and flavors—which can be cheaply obtained from small portions

earnest that she did not heed the interruption, "I should be ashamed ever again to keep house as ignorantly and extravagantly as I used to keep it. And I didn't regard myself as extravagant at that, either! I used to plume myself on my economy, by which I merely meant not buying casaba melons when they first came in, or strawberries in February, or guinea hens when fowl would do. But I know now that economy in food means much more than that, and I think I'll never forget it."

of cheap cuts of meat. There is one thing this war has taught me," she went on, with flashing eyes and resolved mien, "and that is to save intelligently—with instructions from the government—on my table. I don't say that it was worth while to plunge the world into war to teach me something I ought to have been taught anyway, but I do say that since this terrible catastrophe has befallen the race, it is worth while for every one of us to use it so that some permanent good may come out of it. If the war were to end to-morrow—"

"If only it were to end to-morrow!" breathed the grandmother, her glasses misty.

"And if Harry were to become as rich as—as rich as mud—in the next ten years," pursued the bride, so deeply in

The doctor had come in while the bride was in the midst of her harangue. Like all the other women, she produced wools and needles, though hers came out of her medicine case instead of a gorgeously flowered cretonne bag.

"Bravo, little bride!" she said. "If we can all carry over into the period of peace that is coming some of the habits and lessons of these terrible days, we shall not have suffered in vain as individuals, any more than the country will have suffered in vain as a nation. If only we don't all drop back, with a sigh of relief, into extravagance and sloth and selfishness again!"

"It somehow seems to me a waste when I see your fingers flashing with needles, doctor," observed the hostess, after the company had signified their echo of her sentiment with sighs and ejaculations.

"Why? Or do you mean a waste of wool?" asked the doctor grimly, as she struggled to recapture a bunch of stitches that had slipped gayly off her needle into space.

"Of course I don't mean wool. I mean of talent and training," said the hostess warmly. "I think you're a wonder at the knitting, of course. But when one considers how skillful your hands are at other, bigger tasks, doesn't it seem a waste of time?"

"No," answered the doctor decisively, as she triumphantly impaled the last truant stitch on the end of her needle. "No, it doesn't seem a waste of time at all. I never give up making an incision or dressing a wound to knit! I have my confession to make, as well as the bride here. Two or three years ago, I should have agreed that my service to the community was paid through my profession. I believed that, if I wanted to, I could waste all the time in which I was not working—though there really wasn't so much of it! I think I felt superior to knitting and sewing and fancywork and all the rest

of the useful things other women did. Well, when I see, even at the slow, bumbling rate at which I progress with my knitting, how much I accomplish, I am appalled at the thought of the time I must have wasted in the past.

"I do as much medical work as ever—more, I think. But because the war has taught me to utilize the chinks of time, I begin to realize how idle they've been heretofore, those chinks. How disgracefully idle! I understand exactly what my nephew—you remember, the one I told you all about, who left college and is in the aviation corps?—what he meant when he said to his mother: 'Gee, mother, if I had worked at school and college as I have since I went into the service, I'd have been a Phi Beta Kappa at ten!' He was a good student, you know, even before he went into training for the flying service—study came easily to him, and he was bright and quick—but he knew exactly as much about concentration as I used to know about it—and now I think that that was nothing.

"That is something of a lesson—when you think of it—to have been taught by learning to knit a sleeveless sweater without taking a moment from any other work, just in the unoccupied odds and ends of one's time. I hope that never, while this generation of us is alive, at any rate, will it seem ostentatious or in any way peculiar for a woman anywhere to produce her workbag and knit—on trains and street cars, at the theater or the opera, anywhere!"

"I heard my niece saying the other day," contributed Madame Croesus, "that she really thought 'knit two, purl two' was a more intelligent and useful observation than the 'glide one, twinkle two' which it has so largely replaced."

"Yes, or even then, 'I make it hearts—I double hearts,'" said the grandmother, whose only weakness in the ante-bellum days had been for an afternoon of auction.

"To learn how to conserve time as one is learning how to conserve bread scraps and bacon grease—provided that one ever has bacon grease!" murmured the bride. "Really, it's rather a big idea, isn't it? Wouldn't it be wonderful if, with all the horror, there should come a new race of American women out of the war—efficient, frugal, energetic, with all their old reproaches blotted out?"

"And uncomplaining and united, too—don't forget that," cried the doctor. "I do think we are learning to be uncomplaining. It takes a mental defective nowadays to complain. No woman with a modicum of intelligence dares to find fault with the weather and the subway crowds and the scarcity of sugar or coal; she realizes too well what infinitesimal annoyances these are in a world where Liège and Verdun and the Dardanelles and Halifax have happened. I honestly believe there is a hope that, for a generation at least, we have lost the whining female who made her own comfort the measure of her requirements of the universe—just lost her in the race! We shall have done it," she added, "if we only carry over our new virtues into the time of peace."

"It would be wonderful!" cried the débutante. "Think of what we are learning to be! What's become of that dreadful person, the woman of leisure? She's gone. Every one has a job, either professional or volunteer. Every one is measuring hems for the Red Cross or running a power sewing machine or an elevator or a street car or her own motor. Women who used to be fashionable and feel superior about it feel inferior about it now; or else they've lived it down by being good at something real, like cutting sandwiches at the soldiers' canteens, or teaching the East Side how to dehydrate vegetables, after helping it to capture the vegetables. Nobody 'does' society as a business any more. Those who simply can't

exist without their teas and dances and bridge get up teas and dances and bridge for the benefit of war-relief funds, and so keep themselves respectable according to our new standard of respectability. I haven't been to a big dance in ages that didn't beg forgiveness for itself by pretending, at any rate, that it was given chiefly to cheer up homesick soldier boys from a training camp."

"There's one other feature of the new order of things that must be carried on into the period of reconstruction, and afterward," said the hostess. "I mean the sense of union and democracy among women. I never was a very ardent suffrage worker, though of course I believed in the cause and I'm glad we women in New York are through with the struggle to get the vote. But all my friends who were hard-working suffragists used to tell me that one of the most inspiring things about the work was the democracy of it, the unitedness of the women. Nobody was interested primarily in any one else's bank account or social position or address or whether she would do to invite to dinner. They were interested in the thing they were fighting for, and the amount of effort that each one could give to the fight."

"Well, it seems to me that, on a bigger scale, even, women's war work is going to do the same thing for them. That is probably why men are really more democratic than women—they've worked together so many generations and they have so largely come to measure their fellow men in terms of working efficiency, instead of in terms of the worldly advantages that may accrue from working efficiency. Well, that is going to be the way with us women now. At last we have reached a place where we don't scrutinize one another jealously and ask for social credentials before meeting on a human basis."

"It's a magnificent thing! It makes me thrill to think of it—millions of



"Think of what we are learning to be! What's become of that dreadful person, the woman of leisure? She's gone."

women doing thousands of different things, but doing them all for one end; millions of women united in one aim, and asking about one another nothing at all except whether each one is willing to work for that aim. Western democracy may come to mean more than it ever has meant yet, if we keep that up. It may mean social democracy as well as political."

"While we chant our pæan of praise for the qualities war is bringing out in us, I have another confession to make," observed the doctor. "I suppose it concerns another aspect of the democracy about which our good hostess has just been so eloquent. War is teaching some women to subjugate their own opinions to the common opinion; war is making some women less fiercely and uselessly individualistic than they were. I am one of those women. You all know my views on war—the stupidity of it, the sheer dullness of it, to say nothing of the savagery and the inconclusiveness of it! Well, I haven't changed my opinion, but war itself and the work we

have to do for it have shown me that one cannot be an individualist and a real human being at the same time. One must, to be of use to the world, sacrifice something besides time and money and effort and all the lost joys of leisure. One must sacrifice one's opinions if those are contrary to the general opinions.

"It's no use to stand at the street corner and shout against the waste and cruelty of war while all the world is fighting; one must throw one's cherished views into the melting pot along with all the rest of one's cherished things—one's beloved ones, one's sense of security, one's pleasures, one's comforts. It's an awfully hard sacrifice for an opinionated person like me to make. But I have made it, deliberately and consciously.

"I don't believe that war is intelligent any more than I ever did. But I am working with all my strength in war work exactly as I would work to save stuff at a fire, even though I had evidence that it was of incendiary origin,

and that a dishonest fire department, buying defective hose, and a dishonest building department, passing defective work, were primarily responsible for it. I couldn't stand on a street corner then and harangue the fire fighters about inadequate laws against arson and against graft in the city departments and defective hose. I'd have to cease to be an individualist, and work to save. After that——"

The doctor ended grimly. The tea-table group applauded. They realized what energy the doctor would put into her campaign against graft in the departments once those flames were subdued!

"That's one aspect of democracy," she went on. "One can't be an intellectual aristocrat and keep out of the muddle in the world which unintellectuality creates. One has to roll up one's sleeves and fall to. One has to help the world by working with it, not by working against it at every step. That has been the hardest lesson for me to learn from the war—harder even than knitting!"

A clock in the hall chimed the half hour. The knitters rolled up their wool, looked at one another, sighed and smiled as they rose.

"We seem to be agreed," said the grandmother, "that if we women can only 'carry on' after the war the new virtues we are learning, we shall be quite a wonderful set of human beings. Of course that is desirable. But—suppose the choice were given us to wallow in the selfishness and indolence and exclusiveness and extravagance of the old days or purchase our education at the cost of the war—which would it be? Would we choose to lose our salvation, so to speak, or——"

"We would, we would!" they cried.

And the débutante added:

"We would choose everlasting failure, damnation, or whatever the old-school theologians called it, rather than purchase our regeneration at such a price!"

"Which shows," commented the grandmother kindly, "that it wouldn't have been complete failure, a complete damnation, after all. And that, I think, is the answer to the charge I sometimes hear among the disaffected—the charge that there are women to whom the war has been a godsend in interest, occupation, excitement. And the final refutation of that charge will be if——"

"We all carry on afterwards!" they cried in unison.



### MEANINGS

OH, love's a narrow garden plot  
Where sweet red flowers grow,  
Its walls so high they hide the sky  
And fair, wide fields below.

Nay, love's a pair of snow-white wings  
Wherewith the soul may soar  
Close up to God, and, looking down,  
Life's heights and depths explore.

ALINE MICHAELIS.

# One of Gilly's Ideas

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "Adele, Ltd.," "The Plastic Percita," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY O. STEWARD IMHOFF

The sparkling and amusing tale of a perfectly good idea.

GILLY DODD and I have a little apartment on Russian Hill, which is San Francisco's Washington Square—theoretically, and, oh, well, maybe really. But not geographically. I love it nights like this as I walk up from the jerky cable car in a Maxfield Parrish dusk, the bay like a great purple jewel set in a cluster of twinkly bay-city lights; beyond, the bare brown hills where the poppy flames; and best of all the wind—oh, fine and keen and sweet against my lips and more stimulating than the red wine that flows freely in Little Italy at the foot of the hill! Below me and behind me, the garish, heady trail of Market Street.

I thrill to the picture always. It is like being in love all the time, though practically I am really in love very little of the time. If I could stay in love all the time, I'm sure I could be a great painter. As it is, I'm a mere "commercial artist." Most annoying. Still, it has compensating features, such as a comfortably regular weekly pay envelope containing thirty dollars from the firm of Swain & Kimball.

I met Gilberta Dodd at the Art Institute, and being a couple of stray kittens, we started to cuddle up to each other right away. Gilly is a genius with sand in her carburetor, or whatever it is that makes an engine miss fire. Gilly is a bird all poised for flight—that never quite gets on the wing. But the beauty of Gilly is that she doesn't claim that the world has tied a string to her leg.

She admits that she was delivered all right according to specifications—going back to the motor metaphor—but it's so much trouble to keep the gasoline tank filled, and she might wear out her tires speeding up, and all that. And then her well-to-do father sends her a seventy-five-dollar check the first of the month, he having married a snippy little blond person near Gilly's age, who could live with Gilly about as well as a couple of irritable bull terriers could occupy the same kennel. Anyway, Gilly house-keeps for us two, with Toki coming in once a week to clean and every night to do the dishes.

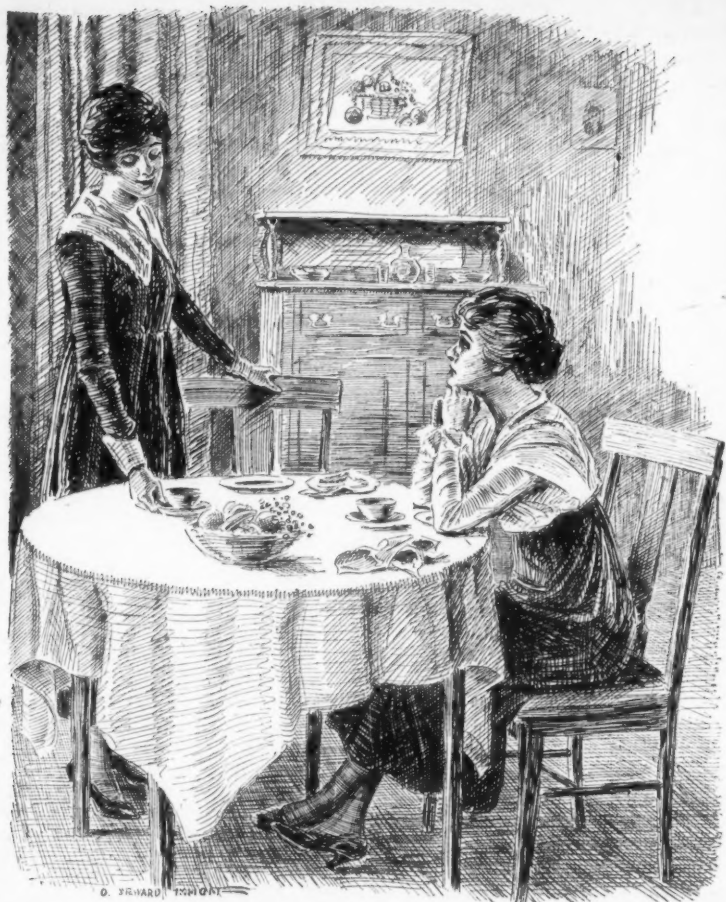
As I was going in this particular evening about five-thirty, I met Gilly's cousin, Ernest Hackett, coming out. Every so often he comes around to have Gilly cut a few sentimental Gordian knots for him. Now I like Ernest—he's so decorative. He's one of these tall, slim, long-lashed, wavy-haired J. Warren Kerrigan-like youths, with a discriminating taste in neckties—and a not so distinguished taste in girls.

Then the way he handles you—figuratively, of course—like a pink glass egg full of bubbles. Being a business woman, accustomed to an address like "For the love of Mike, A. T., is this your idea?" et cetera, it always makes me want to pur when Ernest snatches off his hat, looks into my eyes, cuddles my hand, and murmurs:

"Allyn! How are you?"

On this occasion I said:





Gilly waved me aside. "Why aren't all the men mad about you?" she inquired accusingly.

"Fine. How's the boy? What's your hurry? Aren't you dining with us?"

"Sorry!" He sighed, looking like Keats addressing the nightingale. "Gilly asked me, but I'm afraid I'd be dull company."

He didn't have to draw me a diagram. I knew instantly that he and Bettina Dick were having one of their about-fortnightly rows.

"Oh, cheer up!" I advised him. "There haven't been any fatalities yet."

He smiled a hurt little smile and looked off melancholically over Alcatraz.

"You're not sentimental, are you, Allyn?" he said in a tone of gentle tolerance.

"Oh—it depends—on which way the wind is blowing."

"You've never been in love," he stated sadly.

"Lots of times," I corrected cheerfully.

"In *love*?" he repeated, with an inflection no typewriter can describe.

"Oh, well, that's different," I said. "Come back now and have dinner with Gilly and me."

"That's sweet of you, but not to-night, thank you. Some other time, if I may." He took my hand. "Allyn, I'm pretty blue. Would you help me if——"

"I certainly would, Ernest. Just tell me how."

"It's Gilly's idea," he murmured thoughtfully. "I'd try anything—— She'll tell you. I'll phone or see you to-morrow. Good-by." And he was suddenly off, with an abstracted air like a pensive poet out after a straying Pegasus.

I went on into the house, where Gilly greeted me: "Hello, peaches!" We exchanged our habitual little coming-in kiss. By the time I had freshened up a bit, dinner was on the table. My appetite is not capricious; it's always right there, asking for plenty of salad and a nice piece of steak.

We talked in our usual giggle-punctuated way about the day's happenings until I began to notice that Gilly was looking me over like a connoisseur examining a prize painting. I was about to ask whether there was soot on my nose when she laid down her fork, put her elbows on the table, and cooed at me affectionately:

"Pretty thing!"

I said: "Which collar do you want? It's yours, and of course, if you really insist on having a kitten——"

Gilly waved me aside.

"Why aren't all the men mad about you?" she inquired accusingly.

"They are, of course. Only they do their pining in secret. 'I've a face that

is not so bad, and a figure that drives 'em mad!'"

"Hush!" Gilly warned me. "Don't you know Mrs. Grundy lives just across the light well and keeps her bathroom window open on purpose to hear you sing things like that?"

"Well, don't egg me on," I retorted. "I'm twenty-four and three-quarters and haven't been engaged for four years, and naturally I'm a little sensitive about my intoxicating looks."

"Ernest was here this afternoon," said Gilly.

"Yes, I met him. 'Betsy and I are out' again, I take it."

"That girl," Gilly snapped, "needs a lesson! If Ernest would quit being a doormat——"

"Oh, they make me tired! On-again-off-again, in-again-out-again."

"She needs a lesson," repeated Gilly. "She thinks she's irresistible. She ought to be disillusioned on that point."

"Well, now that the engagement has had its weekly break, why doesn't Ernest attach himself and his attentions to some other charmer?"

"My idea exactly!" cried Gilly. "In all the books and plays, that's the way the hero brings the heroine to time, or she him. That's what I told Ernest this afternoon. I said, 'You just *quit* this time. Let Miss Bettina see you can be consoled, and I'll bet she'll come to her senses.' We talked it all over and——Ernest would like to take you to the dance Friday night."

So that was it! I laughed. Me as Bettina Dick's rival! Me being handed tenderly around by the beautiful Ernest! I laughed some more.

"Why pick on me? I assure you, Gilly, vampiring isn't in my line at all! Bettina wouldn't be jealous of me."

"Why wouldn't she?" Gilly demanded. "Bettina Dick will never see the day!" Gilly's way of saying that Miss Dick couldn't hold a candle to me for attractiveness, which was nice

of Gilly even if an exaggeration. "I suggested you particularly," she went on, "because you're a different type, and that always worries a woman more."

"Does it? Does Ernest really want to make such a desperate play?"

"Of course. He was asking me what on earth he should do. He wants Bettina to marry him and stop this nonsense. This wasn't his idea; it's mine. I told him I'd explain it to you, and then you'd understand everything."

"Understand that these proposed attentions aren't personal, huh? Now, you'd feel bad, Gilly, if you expose me to Ernest's charms this way and I should fall a victim to a hopeless passion."

"You can be the silliest thing!" observed Gilly scornfully.

Well, Ernest telephoned to me next day and asked to call for me at the office. I let him.

He said: "Did Gilly explain her idea to you, Allyn?"

I admitted that she had.

"And what do you think of it?"

"Well, it's a perfectly good idea—if it works. But some awfully good ideas don't."

"It can't do any harm, anyway," he contended. "I don't want to talk about Bettina, Allyn, but she isn't reasonable. Please come with me to the dance. I'd appreciate it so much."

I went. It was a very nice dance, and I enjoyed myself immensely. Bettina looked surprised when I came in with Ernest. I could see her wondering where I got my gown and whether I had on any rouge. She was with Alec Barnard, whose attentions were at the bottom of her "unreasonableness" and who always escorted her about when she was at outs with Ernest.

Bettina Dick is one of these girls who use their heads principally to do their hair on. She's the sort that all the baby-doll songs are written about and sung to. She's about my age, but never

expects to look over eighteen. Ernest acted his part well—hung around me a good deal and asked Bettina to dance once in a "I-do-this-to-be-polite" way. Alec Barnard got himself presented to me and danced with me twice.

On the way home, Ernest invited me to the theater the next Monday, and said a friend was lending him a car Sunday and couldn't he take Gilly and me for a spin in it? I said 'yes' rather doubtfully, suggesting that he needn't overdo the thing.

"I can see the pleasure's all mine," he returned. "But come on, now, Allyn, be game and give Gilly's idea a fair chance, anyway."

So we went. I wasn't taking the affair at all seriously. To tell the truth, the loves of the Ernests and Bettinas never seem to me to be much weightier than thistledown. I went out with Ernest when I had nothing better to do and thought little about any of it. Ernest rushed me rather more than I had bargained for for several weeks, and then one evening he said—we were alone in the house, Gilly having gone out to a lecture with her friend, Professor Nicholas Mifflin:

"I had a note from Bettina to-day."

"Really? What did she say?"

"She asked me to come over. She had something to tell me."

"What do you think of that?" I exclaimed. "The writers are right, then. That's the way it always turns out in plays."

"I told her I had an engagement," said Ernest in a careless-hero fashion.

"Now, don't be mean, Ernest! You've evidently won, so be a gracious victor."

"Running back at the first sign isn't much of a victory," he contended. "I've always done that—that's the trouble."

"Well, I disclaim all responsibility. Only remember, when you're taking a long walk, that you have to walk back."

"Oh, not always. Sometimes you can take a jitney." He is so seldom flippant



"Miss Terry," said Alec, "may I call upon you?" He fixed his brown eyes on my face as men do who think they "have a way with women."

that I was startled. "Besides"—his tone changed—"if one is walking in fairyland, one doesn't care to go back."

"Very nice," I said. "But I'm only a proxy, and you're not expected to practice on me."

He looked at me a trifle languishingly or perhaps it was just those long lashes of his, but he did not pursue the tack. He branched off with:

"The boys are getting up an Italian dinner party. It's to be Thursday at the Red Paint. May I have the pleasure of Miss Allyn Terry's company?"

"Sweet of you, Ernest," I said, "but don't you really think we've gone far enough?"

"Getting tired?"

"Not that. You've been lovely to me, Ernest. But—you and Bettina are wasting so much sweet time—when you might be together. It's too bad."

6

"I thought you were Allyn the Unsentimental," said he lightly.

"I was thinking of Ernest the Sentimental and all he's losing," I retorted.

Gilly and the professor came in just then and suggested Welsh rabbit.

Well, we went to the Red Paint party. There were six couples of us, and we sat at a big table in the middle of the dining room, whose floor was covered with sawdust. The Red Paint, one of the numerous Italian restaurants edging the old Barbary Coast and noted for its good cooking, is supposed to be very bohemian. It has more or less weird and more or less risqué—rather less weird and more risqué, in fact—wall decorations in rhyme, comment, and picture. Early in the evening, however, the atmosphere is rather prim than otherwise, the company being apparently largely composed of school-

teachers and tourists from Iowa and vicinity. Everybody seems never to have been there before. They gape at the naughty walls and examine their fellow guests with an open and eager yearning to observe the wild bohemian in his native jungle, and to become if possible—secretly and temporarily and deliciously—inoculated by the virus.

I sat between Ernest and Alec Barnard, Bettina on Alec's right. Bettina had at first treated me with casual civility as a person of no special importance, for of course Ernest purposely took me to the places where he had taken Bettina and where Bettina was to be found with Alec. As time went on, she had become cooler and cooler, and to-night she looked me up and down with the outraged superiority of the wronged wife giving Theda Bara the once over.

The dinner progressed, everybody became relaxed and merry, and gradually it began to dawn upon me that Alec Barnard was devoting himself with an embarrassing exclusiveness to *me*! He was not entirely neglecting Bettina, but he showed, in all those ways a man has of showing it, that his attention was upon me. I was amused and a little sorry. Bettina was a goose, of course, and had brought it all on herself, and I supposed that perhaps she was employing similar tactics with Alec and that he, too, was rebelling. Still, I did not fancy myself in the rôle of a personified lover's retribution. And though I had enjoyed my little fling, I did not find Ernest's rather fluffy "set" particularly interesting as a steady diet.

With the dessert, the bomb was exploded.

"Miss Terry," said Alec, "may I call upon you?" He fixed his brown eyes on my face as men do who think they "have a way with women."

I couldn't very well say, "No, you can't." So I looked abstracted and said, "Why, yes, do some time," with very little enthusiasm.

"You don't want me!" he murmured, with a supposed-to-be-thrilling hint of intensity.

"Do you want me to get excited about it?" I inquired, smiling. "I'm sorry I'm not very—excitable." I wondered if his idea was to run around after Ernest, alienating the affections of the handsome one's lady friends, just to show his prowess. "I really don't see why you should want to come," I added cattily.

"You forget that I hadn't seen *you* a month ago," which was slamming Bettina most unchivalrously. I was glad that Ernest interrupted.

Ernest was moody on the way home, and the more I thought of Alec, the more amused I was.

"Look here, Ernest," I finally burst out. "One exciting thing about Gilly's ideas is that they often go off in a different place from the point you're watching for the bullet to come out. It's like waiting for an egg to hatch and all of a sudden you find it's turned into a cabbage that hits you in the eye."

"I don't exactly get you," said Ernest stiffly.

"Now this idea of Gilly's about you and Bettina—and me. It's worked out beautifully, but in an unforeseen way."

"Has it?" said Ernest.

I had to laugh.

"What do you think happened to-night? Alec Barnard asked to call on *me*! You see how that works? I call off the dog, so to speak, and you go back and make it up with Bettina—and there you are!"

He was silent a moment. Then he echoed, "Yes, there we are!" rather bitterly.

"Well, isn't that what you wanted?" I demanded. "A free field with Bettina?"

"I suppose it was," he replied slowly.

"Well, I think the psychological moment has arrived," I asserted. "You

go nicely to Bettina to-morrow and—  
be friends again."

He sighed.

"Very well. I'll go."

After we had said good night, he lingered.

"Allyn—are you going to let Barnard call?"

"Why not?"

"Oh—nothing. Good night."

Alec sent me flowers the next day, but that was the only bulletin from the battlefield.

That night, as Gilly and I were getting ready for bed, I said:

"Well, I suppose Ernest and his Bettina are locked in a fond embrace about now. The happy ending! Gilly the theory, and Allyn the practice. Shall we shake?"

Gilly did not offer to shake.

"What kind of a fellow is this Alec?" she asked thoughtfully.

"Oh, you can always lose the dog," I said cheerfully.

Not a word from Ernest all the next day. I giggled when I thought that probably Bettina had made him promise *never* to speak to me again. But while Gilly and I were at dinner that night, he telephoned, asking if he could see me that evening. I said yes, and he thanked me in his most highfalutin' manner.

"Do you suppose it's all right?" Gilly wondered. "Did he sound happy?"

I was obliged to admit that I detected no hilarity about him. Before we could do much speculating, however, the young hero arrived. We exchanged a few remarks about the weather, and then he sat and gloomed until Gilly began to fidget.

"Good heavens, Ernest," she exhorted, not too elegantly, "get it off your chest! You give me the high fants! Or"—she shot me a glance—"do you want to talk to Allyn alone?"

"I beg your pardon, Gilly. I guess you may as well hear—as long as it was your idea."

Gilly stared at him and openly braced herself.

"I went to see Bettina last night," Ernest proceeded. "I thought I should talk things over with her or—Allyn thought I should."

"Well?" Gilly prompted sharply.

"The idea was, I believe," he went on, with, I thought, a faint inflection of malice, "that Bettina would now fall on my neck and beg me to put my ring back on her finger."

"And it didn't pan?" I suggested languidly.

"It did not. Bettina said our differences didn't amount to much until I began chasing around with—Allyn Terry. But since I had shown how *easily* I could be consoled——"

"Ooh! The arnica, please, Gilly!" I cried.

"No sensible girl would ever have any faith in me again," Ernest finished grimly.

Gilly was taken decidedly aback. She swallowed hard.

"But did you explain to her that it was she you were trying to win back? That you were only giving her a dose of her own medicine? That——"

"Oh, no," returned Ernest coolly, "I didn't say anything like that. I said how lucky it was for us both to discover how unsuited we really were to each other. I said I was very sorry to have our acquaintance end in any ill feeling, but that"—he paused a second and then his voice actually shook—"I could not be anything but grateful for any event that had brought me the honor of Miss Terry's friendship."

"Why, Ernest!" gasped Gilly.

A sort of dank silence settled over the room. I did not look at the other two, partly because I did not want to laugh, and after a moment because I didn't feel like laughing. There is nothing I like to have on my conscience less than messing other people's affairs. Gilly had often said what a splendid





Gilly was taken decidedly aback. She swallowed hard. "But did you explain to her that it was she you were trying to win back?"

thing it would be for Ernest to marry Bettina Dick, because her father was rich and influential and would undoubtedly do much for Ernest. And here, just for our trying to "fix it," the whole thing was apparently off for good. Ernest's voice brought me back.

"And now," he was saying gently to Gilly, "I'd like to have a little talk with Allyn, if you don't mind, Gilberta."

I could see that she hated to go, but she couldn't very well refuse, so she stalked out rather high and mightily, to cover up how worried she really was.

I didn't say a word—just sat on in the window seat watching a delicate veil of fog creep up the bay. Ernest walked over and stood beside me, silent, too, for some time. Then, in his most musical voice, he said:

"Allyn—Allyn dear, won't you look at me?"

The tone was a masterpiece. I promptly looked at him. And he surely looked a Prince Charming. His eyes were fixed on me in a way that made what I flatter myself is a rather well-disciplined heart jump a little.

"Allyn, I have learned to love you. It seems I must always have loved you. You—I—you have shown me what a *real* woman can be. I am asking you to marry me, Allyn."

I felt horrid—sorry and annoyed. Annoyed because behind that pleading tenderness there was the unconscious assurance of the man who is used to being successful with women. He laid his nice white hand over mine. And I pulled mine away.

"Ernest, I needn't tell you how surprised I am. You must know I never dreamed——"

"Why not? Didn't my manner tell you how I felt toward you?"

"Why should I? You have a very wonderful manner with all women, and I didn't see any reason to regard it as particularly personal. Considering that we were merely trying to reunite you to Bettina, anyway, I should certainly have been an idiot to——"

"Can we control our hearts?" he murmured.

"Ernest, I'm sorry, but it isn't a bit of use. Do please go and make it up with Bettina——"

"I haven't the slightest interest in Bettina," he assured me. "You haven't any cause to be jealous of her, dear. I understand how you feel, though, Allyn. I won't be impatient. My devotion, my deepest, tenderest devotion, will satisfy your pride—will prove——"

"You're talking like a perfect goose! I don't want your devotion! I won't have it! I have always regarded you as one of Bettina's personal possessions, and I do yet! I would as soon steal her hat!"

"I don't seem to be able to make you understand that everything is over forever between Bettina and me."

"And I don't seem to be able to make you understand that there never can be anything between you and me," I retorted.

"Dearest," he murmured reproach-

fully, like saying, "Ah-ah, mustn't say that!" to a naughty child.

I thought of that old song, "What Could the Poor Girl Do?" I couldn't get up and leave him without walking right over him, because he had plumped himself down on the floor by the window seat where I sat. There he was, looking so handsome and mooning up at me from under those long lashes and just biding his time until he should press a betrothal kiss on my willing lips.

"Ernest," I said, "when I went into this fool business, I assure you I did not at all foresee this. You've been very nice to me, and I thank you. And I appreciate the compliment you're paying me, but I'm really serious when I tell you that I don't at all care for you in that way. May I ask you to excuse me?" And I made a motion to rise.

He sprang up instantly.

"It's my fault, dear," he declared, ignoring my remarks altogether. "I've been too hasty. But I'll see you again soon. Think of me a little, won't you?"

He took my hand, kissed it, bade me a tender good night, and made an affectionate exit. I could hear that Gilly waylaid him in the hall.

When she came in, she looked expectantly at me. I merely looked back.

"Wouldn't that beat you?" she demanded in a stricken voice.

I said it hadn't yet.

"Why, I never thought of such a thing!" she went on. "That poor boy! He's absolutely mad about you, Allyn."

"Oh, fudge!" I said. "Look here, Gilberta, I'd be obliged if you'd spend the night watches thinking up a new way to reunite your handsome cousin to his first love or at least his one-before-the-last love."

That night, after I'd put out my light, I lingered by my open window. The salt breeze kissed me healthily, the lights of the city spread below me like

a giant jeweled stomacher before a pygmy, city night noises came like the distant rumbling laughter of giants, too. The wonder of things seemed to touch my heart with a strange wistfulness.

A few short weeks ago, Ernst had been contriving a way to keep one woman's heart; now, in all sincerity, it seemed he sought to win another. And Alec Barnard— They had somehow betrayed themselves to me; it was like performing a miracle and then showing you how the trick is done—like exhibiting a manikin and the strings that work it. I was not even wholly unmoved, being just a woman, but I was also just a little scornful of the ways of love.

By morning Gilly was serene again, disclaiming all responsibility for human cussedness, and even asking—with her tongue in her cheek—why I didn't take Ernest.

When I came home from the office, she grinned at me shamelessly, asked how the heart-smashing business was, and suggested that there was nothing like a love affair to inject a little excitement into the monotony of life.

"Well, something has certainly been injected into my monotony," I informed her. "Bettina Dick has gone South for an indefinite visit, and I hear her mother has told all around that I am a regular little amateur vampire. Ernest has started writing poetry to me, and Alec Barnard stopped me on a corner to-night and told me I was the only girl he had ever really loved! Just to get even with you, Gilberta Dodd, I shall start in making eyes at your professor this very night!"

"Well, go to it," said Gilly calmly. "I have an idea——"

I threw a pillow at her.



### VISION

OLD, age old, thy mountains, Lord,  
 And yet so very young,  
 As young as little children are!  
 Thy sunrises have splendid been  
 Since time began, and flung  
 New beauty on the rugged crags,  
 With each new day,  
 A beauty soothing every scar.  
 O ye of little vision, ye who sigh  
 That youth is passing quickly by,  
 A thing of cobwebs strung  
 Across a summer sky,  
 A glimpse of azure set in thunder stain,  
 A smiling moment, then the hurricane  
 That sweeps high hopes to crumbling dreams,  
 Look to the mountaintops, behold  
 The upward-springing spires,  
 Through twilight's waning gleams  
 Of purple, rose, and misty gold!  
 Soon, soon approach the new dawn fires,  
 And night hath many a star!  
 Old, age old, thy mountains, Lord,  
 And yet so very young,  
 As young as little children are!

STELLA SAXTON.

# The Big Jump

By Howard Philip Rhoades

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

A realistic story of theatrical life. Fate brings an opportunity to Alice Dunn.

CARL POTTS gazed at his wife with wonder, as she halted breathlessly at his side.

"Great!" he praised. "You've got the stuff there to put you across the big jump, Alice, if——"

"Yes," agreed his wife grimly. "If?"

She glanced at him in a curious way. Her strong gray eyes explored his weak blue ones in searching fashion, as if to find his reason for touching upon this question.

She could not help wondering what conclusion he had reached. She weighed her knowledge of his vision against her conviction regarding the number she had just finished rehearsing on the dim stage of Blumenthal's East Side Burlesque Theater.

Were his words praise or an arraignment of her circumstances?

"If," he went on, "you had the chance."

She made no reply, but continued to stare searchingly. His blue eyes fell, as they always did when a stronger pair questioned them, and nearly every pair of eyes were stronger than those of Carl, a being out of place in a self-assertive and jostling world.

"You don't like to eat in that back room," faltered Carl. "I'll slip over and fetch us a lunch."

He picked up his wife's heavy coat and dropped it upon her shoulders to guard her from chill. Then he touched her assuringly on the arm, and walked out of the battered stage door into the twilight.

Alice Potts, known to the burlesque

stage as Alice Dunn, sat with bowed head, pondering the question which, banish it temporarily as she might, always recurred again, becoming almost an obsession. She did not hear approaching steps in the darkened auditorium until a man stood close to the orchestra pit.

"That was fine, Miss Dunn. You do it as well as Miss Ward herself."

"Thank you," she said involuntarily, and then gazed into the dimness before her.

The man grasped the side of the low box and swung lightly upon the stage. As he came toward her, she saw that he was straight, compactly built, and possessed of a handsome, earnest face which seemed to place him not far past the thirty-year mark.

As he approached, he held out his hand, and she put hers within it, without knowing why. A strange sensation, bringing back earlier, happier years, was upon her as he pressed her hand. Then, as he dropped it, he hastened to say:

"I'm Parker South, Miss Ward's manager. Just over to see Blumenthal about a garden set at his Broadway house. I want it for a road company of 'The Glorious Girl.' Yes, we're putting out at least one. The show's going big. At the end of its first week, we're sure of a season on Broadway. I'm interested in that impersonation of Miss Ward. You and she used to be together?"

"Yes," said Alice Dunn. "We're from the same town."

"So she told me. How long have you been in the business?"

"Four years—just as long as she."

"How long did you work with her?"

"Two years. Then we came East."

"She never was in burlesque, was she?"

"No."

"How did you get separated?"

"She got a chance in musical comedy, and there wasn't one for me. I took all there was at the time—burlesque. Then I married, and you know how it is. Often, in the show business, there's a place for the wife, but not for the husband."

"That's why I've stayed single," smiled South. "I wish you would come to my office this afternoon and have a talk with me. There might be something good in it for you."

"Would that include something for Carl?" she asked doubtfully.

"What can he do?"

"With this show, he's doing some comedy. Just a few bits," she went on haltingly. "He's not——"

"Can he sing? We're cared for in the comedy line, but we will carry, at least while business is good, a male chorus of six or eight."

Alice gulped hard as she thought of Carl's efforts at singing and dancing. But she buried her feelings in a thrust at herself.

"I'm afraid, Mr. South—— Well, you know how burlesque gets you. One is either a burlesque person or one isn't. Few rise and fewer still stay risen."

"You said it, Miss Dunn," agreed South. "Burlesque is boarding-house fare, but sure as the sun. Musical comedy is hotel food, with many a slip. That's why some mighty good entertainers stay in the slapstick business. But you could rise. You've got the stuff. Yet—you know your own business. You'll be over to see Miss Ward again?"

"Coming to-night," answered Miss

Dunn. "I'm taking a last look. Next Monday I start impersonating her twice a day."

"Bye-bye, then," bade South, and disappeared up the aisle.

A moment later, Carl let the door slam and crossed the stage.

"Who was it?" he asked curiously. He had seen the man.

"Mr. South, Miriam's manager."

"Oh, South? Say, they're noticing that boy. He's the coming musical producer. This 'Glorious Girl's' got them all talking. It's got enough, besides Miriam, to run it two years and make him rich and her famous. But his head won't swell. He's a prince. What did he say?"

"Just speaking of Miriam's success."

"She's a hit. But no more than you could be. Your impersonation in burlesque will be as good as her original on Broadway."

"The world won't say so."

"It would if things were fair. Did South say anything about your number."

"He liked it."

"You should have struck him for a job. He might have a second company, or something."

"I've signed a burlesque contract for this season, Carl, and so have you," she reminded.

"There never was a contract that couldn't be side-stepped," he asserted. "You wouldn't need to care. Once out, you'd be always out."

"Well, this family, Carl," she said with a smile, "is in burlesque, and there let it stay. We can't all do big things. The sister team of Ward and Dunn is lucky that half of it made the big time. The rest can stay in burlesque and get its forty weeks sure."

"But I don't like it, Alice. I'd like you to have as much as—more than Miriam."

"Never mind me, Carl," she said and for a moment rested her dark-brown



She had been suffering the brutal lash of a coarse director who had singled her out to make her dance while the rest of the chorus stood by and tittered.

head upon his narrow, rounded shoulder. He did not see her face with its pained question, asking how much of the situation he understood. He did not see this look vary to one almost of fear—fear that he might understand and feel the bitterness of the truth.

He returned her embrace. Then, as his eyes caught sight of the sandwiches and milk upon the table, he set about

serving them. He drew up two faded gilt chairs which had graced many a "table bit," where the prima donna and leading comedian commit burlesque over property wine, and announced, "Dinner is served."

Before Carl had got far into the meal, his mind went back to their last topic, and he asked:

"Did South want to know anything



about when you and Miriam were together?"

"Yes, he mentioned it."

"Did you tell him you lived in the same town, started in the same 'three-a-day' vaudeville, and that you worked 'sisters' for two years?"

"Not in detail."

"You should have made it plain how you convinced Miriam your team would have to come to New York to do better, and you should have told him just how you came to be in burlesque while she got a place in musical comedy."

"He didn't care about all that."

"Yes, but he ought to know. He should know you'd been looking for work together up to the day she got her job, and that she just happened upon a musical-comedy company needing one girl, while you got a burlesque offer. I should think he could see that you're as clever as Miriam, only you didn't happen to hit the right office. If you had, you'd be the star of 'The Glorious Girl' to-day, and she'd be in burlesque."

"That's a supposition, Carl. Besides, if I'd gone into musical comedy, I never would have met you."

"That would have been a disaster," he said, a strange note in his voice. Again she looked at him searchingly.

"It would," she said firmly, grasping his inert hand upon the table and looking earnestly into his weak blue eyes. "I'd have missed knowing the most devoted man that ever lived."

As they sat there silent upon the dimly lighted stage, there came back to her their early days. She had first seen Carl during a dress rehearsal, standing beneath a New England fir tree interpolated into a Parisian garden after the manner of burlesque. His make-up was that of the only character he had ever done—a tramp in tatters, with a grotesque streak of paint across his face which made him the more insignificant and pathetic.

She, her face burning beneath her paint, had been suffering the brutal lash of a coarse director who had singled her out to make her dance while the rest of the chorus stood by and tittered.

"The rat!" had been Carl's first words to her when he had found her wiping away the tears behind some canvas marble. "He don't know real dancing. You were doing it too clean for him. That's something to learn in burlesque, girlie—do it as they tell you, not as your heart says. It's a hard game for a girl who is right!"

The round-shouldered, sunken-chested man with the weak blue eyes had seen that this new girl was different, and somehow the big heart in his flat body had been called to smooth her rocky road. She had been attracted to him by the mere fact he was the only one in the company who spoke a word of kindness to her in those first days of repulsion and disillusion.

Later had come the road, and new difficulties and dangers. The difficulties had been eliminated as she had learned her new work. Carl Potts had cared for the dangers. The first Saturday night had found them in a Pennsylvania mining town and, after the performance, Carl had been waiting for her outside her dressing room.

"If you don't mind, I'll walk over to the hotel with you," he had said.

After they had passed through the dark, dingy streets about the theater, with their lines of drunken, insulting mashers, she had understood.

"In vaudeville, it's different," he had explained. "But in burlesque, you got to expect this. I've a sister—thank God, not in this business!—but if she was, I'd like to think there was a fellow to pilot her through the wild-oats fields of a Saturday night."

This was one instance of a long, continuous series. Five years in burlesque had made Carl an inseparable part of it, but it also had taught him all the

tricks of the slapstick and girlie business. He had walked home with her the night she had cried over a letter saying that Miriam was going to marry a musical-comedy director.

That night, for some reason, she had touched the hand of Carl, as he had bidden her good night. The letter of her chum had brought about a significant change in her heart. No girl likes to be left behind. The last bit of resistance to the steadily growing devotion of Carl had been eliminated. It had been like many marriages, one of propinquity and circumstance.

A week later, Miriam had written:

"My engagement is off. I found out too much about him. One can't marry in the show business and be happy."

Alice Dunn remembered her answer as well as if she had kept a copy. After expressing regret, she had written:

"I disagree. One can be happy and successful in the show business—if married to the right man."

The right man! Married and successful! These phrases burned into her brain as her hand loosed its grip upon that of her husband, on the dimly lighted stage of Blumenthal's East Side Burlesque Theater.

They had remained alone after a late rehearsal to go over her impersonation of Miriam Ward in "The Glorious Girl," which was to be a featured number during the coming season in "Blumenthal's Buxom Burlesquers." It was the Saturday night before the Monday opening. It was the closing night of

the first triumphant week of Miriam Ward in "The Glorious Girl." As they finished their simple meal, it was after seven-thirty.

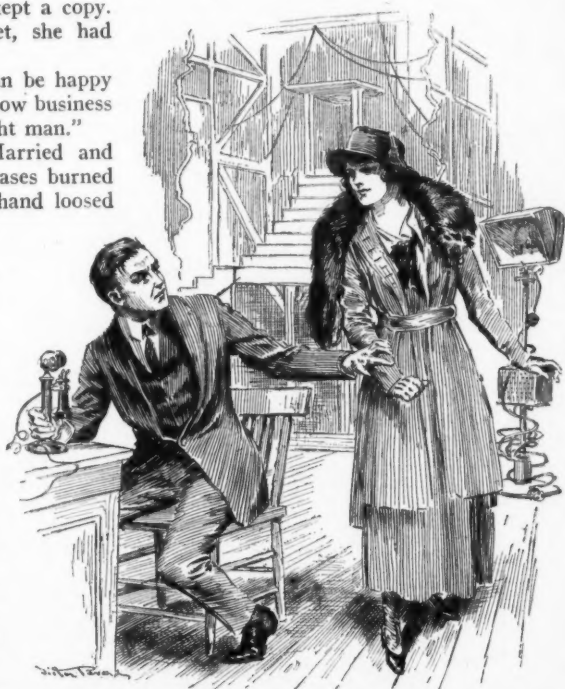
Carl switched off the remaining lights and crossed the dark stage to where Alice stood. His arms went about her there in the dark and he whispered:

"Lovey, I wish you would go to Mr. South and speak for the lead of that second company of 'The Glorious Girl.' You'd get it in a minute."

"Carl," she said, "what have you told me about married people in different companies on the road? Haven't you said separations are sure to take place?"

"We're different. I trust you and I know myself."

"Nonsense!" she said. "Where I go,



"Quick, Miss Dunn—into Miss Ward's things! It's nearly curtain time!"

you go, and if anything separates us, it won't be a theatrical manager."

He gave her a final hug, and then, as he snapped the lock, they stepped into the street and went toward Third Avenue.

"I'll drop in at the club and then call for you," he said. "It's now close to seven-forty-five. I'll come about nine-thirty. How will that be?"

"Fine!" she said, and pressed his arm in parting.

While he went to his club, a place in the rear of which young men "put on the gloves" and whaled punching bags, and in the front of which beer and poker were enjoyed, she took a cross-town car and then subways north. She got out at Fiftieth Street, and thence it was but a step to the theater where "The Glorious Girl" stood forth in magnificent illumination. Below, in letters hardly smaller, was the name "Miriam Ward."

"A-l-i-c-e D-u-n-n," she spelled. "It would more than fit in."

It was after eight when Alice Dunn entered the stage door. She crossed just back of the curtain, which separated the growing murmur of an assembling audience from the bright scenery set for the first act. In front of number one she stepped and knocked.

Miriam's maid said, "Come!" and Alice pushed open the door.

"Oh!" she said, surprised. "Miss Ward not here yet?"

"No," said the maid. Then she looked from her sewing to a small clock on the star's dressing table. "Nearly eight-fifteen!" she exclaimed. "Miss Ward is always here right after eight. Have a seat, Miss Dunn. She'll be here soon."

Alice sat for perhaps five minutes, with no sounds save the occasional far-away voice of some chorus girl hurrying into her clothes, or the incipient strumming of the musicians below. Then there was a quick step and a jan-

gle of voices outside. With excitement tensing his face, Parker South threw open the door without a knock.

"Miss Ward!" he burst out. "She is——"

"She's in the hospital by this time!" cried a man who looked over South's shoulder. "I tell you I saw her on the stretcher. They were over at one side of the big crowd around the machine that hit her. There was lots of excitement, but I didn't wait to see any more. I knew you'd be up against it, so I hurried over to tell you.

"What hospital did they take her to?"

"A policeman told me Roosevelt."

"Get them on the line—— No, I will. Poor girl, what a smash-up when she was making good! And all I put into the show—— Yes, operator, Roosevelt, as quick as you can!"

He leaned against the wall, weak and sick. Then he exchanged quick words with the hospital and hung up.

"They can't tell yet. She's unconscious. Oh, I hope she comes through, but——"

He shook his head sadly. Then, looking around, he jumped as from an electric shock. His eyes lighted with hope as he grasped the arm of Miss Dunn, who had come near the telephone to listen.

"Fate hasn't entirely damned us!" he cried. "Quick, Miss Dunn—into Miss Ward's things!"

"But, Mr. South——"

"Please don't! You've got to do it! This is my big bet, the one I staked everything on. The public mustn't know. Maybe by Monday—— I saw you work to-day. You can do Miss Ward's big number right after the opening chorus. We'll fix the first act over so as to not use you any more. Then in the second—— But we'll see how things are going then. It'll keep the show moving. It'll give us a big press story, and introduce you—— Miss Ward would want you to—and——"

"Mr. South, I can't —" she began.

"Please!" South appealed, pushing her into the dressing room. He followed, closing the door. With none to hear, he said in a low voice: "Please, Miss Dunn — for me!"

Outside, he had been the business man, pleading for mercenary gain. Now that was all gone. They were alone, and he held her hand, as he had held it that afternoon. The same strange sensation, bringing back forgotten thrills, touched her. He was sincere, making a personal appeal through something intimate—something that made her forget her grounds for her first refusal.

"Please!" he repeated. "Just for me! It'll be the making of you."

Her first thought came back. She choked:

"I don't want to be made. A step on this stage will take me away from—from—that to which I owe everything."

"But we all owe it to ourselves to rise as high as we can. Hasn't your husband urged you to try to rise?"

She started, remembering that moment on the darkened burlesque stage. A second she hung undecided. Then South exerted the personal appeal again:

"Please—for me!"

Dimly wondering why she allowed it, she said with a gasp:



Alice Dunn knew that the house was following, breathless.

"Yes—send the maid in. I'll do my best!"

Softer, finer garments than it had ever been her fortune to wear were quickly fitted on by the maid. Her physical similarity to Miriam, destined to give her more than one advantage in this undertaking, facilitated a rapid and perfect fit. She moved according to command, the novelty of being dressed by a maid swallowed up in her eagerness for the trial. The curtain was fifteen minutes late when the choristers pranced their way from the wings.

Now she was ready.

"Forget everything! Go in and win!" whispered South earnestly, gripping her hand.

The chorus had retreated, and the company was grouped on either side, watching. Already the orchestra was repeating its vamp and the director was straining his eyes for the singer. The audience, keyed up by the long wait, was pushing forward in its seat to glimpse the brilliant new star.

In the center of the calcium shaft there paced upon the stage a lovely vision. Slim, graceful, supple, it moved toward the center rhythmically. Now it was still. Then a song flowed from the smiling lips.

It was not such a song as would find place among the world's best music. It was simply one of those popular airs which flourish to-day in the metropolis, reach the towns and villages next week, and die by the end of the season.

It may have been this melody that made "The Glorious Girl." It may be the song would have had a wide appeal anywhere and upon any lips. Perhaps the song made Miss Ward's success easier. Perhaps it helped Alice Dunn as she sang it now.

But the field of probability was left behind when the singer moved from song to dance. Some clever young man in "Tin Pan Alley" had given the melody to the singer, but the dance was of the woman. When it started, she bade farewell to the other artist, and went on the sole responsibility of Alice Dunn.

Miriam Ward had induced Mr. South to allow her to insert a dance between the verses of "The Glorious Girl." She felt it would be an addition to the number. To Alice Dunn, as she began to execute the dance of her life, it was the threshold of opportunity. She took what Miriam Ward had conceived as a part of the number and made it the feature.

Around she went, bending, sweeping,

balancing, turning, now a whirl of white, now a tongue of flame, now a ray of light. The silks covered a body that molded itself from second to second, billowing, twisting, circling, ever plastic, yielding beyond conception. And above, crowning, was a look of triumph. Alice Dunn knew that the house was following, breathless. She knew that she had torn off the cloak of mediocrity. It was gone, and her splendid body leaped and throbbed in habiliments crystalline and pure. She was no longer an impersonator. She had taken the dance, common to her and Miriam in the other days, and with the heat of an artist's soul had forged a masterpiece.

One moment she soared like a bird, as if to look from a height upon the ocean of faces before her. Then she sank inert and bowed before them. Ahead of the deluge of applause impending, trickled a single significant stream. It was a murmuring sigh from behind, marking the expression of the company—of the beings who realize the tears and work behind every triumph, and who know by instinct when triumph has come.

Then, overwhelming the little stream that gave her sweetest gratification, came a tidal wave of appreciation. She was made! Broadway was stretching out its hand to her. America beckoned. Fortune, which makes a certain future for those who know how to use its gifts, was all around her.

There was an encore; then a second verse; then more dancing; and more again before she was allowed to leave. So close to the edge of the stage that he was almost visible to the audience, South awaited her.

"Wonderfully done, and great news!" he cried. "Miriam is not badly hurt. She'll be back in a month or two. Meanwhile, you are leading woman, with your choice of the companies when she does return."

He put his arm around her impul-

sively as they walked toward her dressing room. She did not try to take it away. She was thinking. As she dropped into a chair, the fire of her triumph seemed to dim. With the stage it faded behind her. He noted her thoughtful humor.

After a moment, he laid his hand upon her shoulder and said:

"Alice—yes, let it be Alice—I have a confession. You remember playing Cleveland last winter? Your photograph was in front of a theater there. I was in Cleveland, making a few changes in one of my shows. I intended to stay two days. I stayed a week. Tuesday afternoon I had a box at your show. Wednesday, too, I was there. Then I learned you were the wife of the third comedian. But in the afternoon I was still there."

He paused a moment, and passed his hand lightly over her hair. Then he went on:

"I saw your ability then—but I didn't think of it. I thought of you. I went back to New York, but not to forget. I didn't come to Blumenthal's Theater to-day to see him. He had been to see me and dropped the fact that the actress doing the impersonation was Alice Dunn. I never had forgotten the name. I couldn't keep from coming."

His hand was upon hers, but she was drawing away. She could not listen to this. He bent forward and held her.

"Only a moment!" he begged. "I know I haven't the right. I won't say what you fear. Let me only say this: Some time the hour, our hour, may come. When I joked to-day of staying single for fear of marrying in theatrical life, it was a joke. I am single, but not for that reason. I have always waited for— And now that— You will remember, please, Miss Dunn. I—I'll go—"

Before he stirred, there was a knock. It came again insistently.

There came to the mind of Alice Dunn one meaning for that knock. She saw a round-shouldered, sunken-chested man with weak blue eyes, who was forever waiting for her around dressing-room doors. He never could stay long away from her. Often he curtailed his engagements to come for her earlier than he had said he would. He had even changed his plans and followed in her footsteps after telling her that he was going elsewhere. Carl Potts would be along soon. Carl—after the events of the past few minutes!

The knock again, and South opened. It was the stage manager.

"Here's a paper," he said. "It says Miss Ward will recover."

"Thanks," said South. "I had that word from the hospital."

"George Banks—you know, at the Plaza," said the manager, pointing to the paper, "was an eyewitness. They've got his story here." He bent the paper to see better and read: "He says, 'I noticed Miss Ward standing at the curb, waiting for the traffic to part. The man approached her, and I could see that they were acquainted. He offered to escort her across, and they started. Just then this car shot in from the side street. As it was upon them, he threw her out of the way and received the impact which one or the other of them must inevitably have received. He died on the way to the hospital.'"

"Who died?" cried South.

"This man in the accident."

"But I wasn't told—"

"The man who told you just saw Miss Ward, and ran. This victim was carried to the other side of the street. Did you ever hear of him? He's an actor—Carl Potts."

"Potts—Potts," reflected South. "Why, Miss Dunn—"

He turned to find that his future leading woman had fainted.



# *From the Standpoint of Science*

By Charles Spencer Dudley

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT HENCKE

**Chemistry and music. The love story of an unconscious collaborator.**

HE met her by chance on the corner, late in the afternoon, and asked to carry her violin case. She was twenty, and her name was Oriana Gray. Her father had been a poet. He left her only the romantic name, a trunkful of manuscripts, and an old and mellow-toned violin into which, during one period of her girlhood, he and her mother had put all their savings. Her mother's death had preceded her father's. She had her mother's beauty. Her lot in life was to play in a moving-picture-theater orchestra.

He was twenty-two and his name was Philip Strong. His parents, also, were both deceased. He had inherited a love of science, and had lately come to have a great admiration for Oriana, who lived in the same boarding house.

There was but a thin wall of lath and plaster between them, so that he sometimes heard her softly practicing in the morning before he went to work. She, returning from the theater at night, often listened to him whistle as he busied himself with some kind of chemical work, which she did not very clearly understand, but which she knew to be everything to him. She would hear him walking back and forth before the homemade laboratory table that he had so proudly exhibited to her and the other boarders in the house.

He was employed as an assistant bookkeeper in a wholesale drug store, but he hoped by home study to become a skillful chemist—perhaps even to work out a discovery which he believed he

had in embryo. Only Oriana took him seriously in this. The others chose to call it a hobby. They had even begun to venture to reprove him for spending, as he frankly admitted, practically all he earned, aside from what it cost him to live, for books and chemicals. He had never gone to college. What could he expect to do at such a thing? She alone had faith in him.

The boarders were determined to make a match between them. Oriana said nothing, but smiled sweetly, and sometimes blushed, when they joked her. He avowed that he was married to science.

As they walked along the crowded city street, their attention was attracted to a new automobile at the curb. Other pedestrians also stopped to look at it as they passed. It was a large automobile, graceful in its lines, richly upholstered, and painted in a new and striking combination of colors; the very latest thing in a motor car, the acme of luxury. Beside it stood two typical business men. One, apparently the owner of the car, was pointing out some of its perfections. His pride showed in every gesture.

"Humph!" Philip said when he and Oriana had got beyond earshot. "See the little bipeds gloating over their new toy! How wonderful a thing can be to-day when everybody knows that it will be on the junk pile to-morrow. That's the way it is with us on this little earth of ours, while we all go hurtling through the great stretches of space and

time, which we, insectlike, can't comprehend."

"Mercy!" she exclaimed.

"Well, isn't it so?" he asked. "Oh, give me the big things, even if I can't see very much of them!"

"That's one way of looking at it," she said, "but I suppose that when you are out riding on a moonlight night, with somebody that you like, and the automobile rolls along, carrying you as gently as if you were wafted on a downy cloud, and you are snug and comfortable, and the landscape is unfolding in all its charm, you don't think about the universe."

"Have you been for an automobile ride like that?" he asked, with unusual earnestness.

"No," she answered, "I was just imagining."

They went into a music store. She wanted to buy some manuscript paper.

"I have a little music to write off," she said.

"Can it be that she is trying to compose?" he thought, as she left him for a moment to go to another counter. But then, he concluded, she doubtless had a great deal of copying to do in her orchestral work.

The paper bought, they started on, oblivious of all around them, and smiling and chatting with the irrepressible vivacity of youth. They had almost reached the boarding house when he remarked, more soberly:

"I'm going to work like the deuce to-morrow. It's Sunday. That's about the only time I really get a chance to do anything."

She faced him, serious herself.

"Now, Philip," she said, "I know that nothing is so precious to you as your work, but I can also see that you are overdoing. You're getting real thin. I want you, instead of working to-morrow, to do something for me. I know it isn't nice for a girl to ask a man to take her out, but I don't have to

work to-morrow either, and you need some recreation. I want you to take me to the seashore for all day. Will you?"

He looked up, surprised and a little embarrassed.

"Of course," he replied, "in that case the work will have to be postponed. There's but one choice."

"That's perfectly dear of you," she said. "Now I have the greatest little secret you've ever heard. I'll tell it to you to-morrow."

He manifested no slight degree of concern.

"You're not going to— It isn't anything that has to do with anybody else?" he asked ingenuously.

"Oho!" she laughed. "You'd like to know that, would you? Well, you just wait and see. But you'll be glad. I'll tell you that much."

"I suppose I'll feel that I ought to be glad if it's anything that's good for you. But I'm curious to know what it is."

"You just wait. Oh, it's the funniest thing! You're such a big simpleton, you never could guess. You don't know what an awful goose you are."

"Why not tell me now?"

"Then maybe you wouldn't take me to the seashore."

"Wouldn't I? Try it and see."

"No, this secret is going to be told only when we are down at the s-e-e-shore. We'll have a nice long walk, right on the beach where we have to skip back every time a wave comes in and breaks and sends the water sliding out at our feet."

"It's a go," he said. "How early shall we start?"

They were entering the house at the time and so put by the subject till after supper. The meal over, they resumed the discussion on the porch, where they sat enjoying the coolness of the summer evening, until time for her to leave for the theater. Attractions of one beach were weighed against those of another.



There was but a thin wall of lath and plaster between them, so that he sometimes heard her softly practicing.

The prospective outing took on a delightful aspect. When she had gone, he went upstairs to his room in high spirits.

It was difficult to get down to work, but once he had done so, he became absorbed in it. He had on other occasions remarked the absolute completeness of this engrossment. At times, when it seemed as if he were in no mood for it at all, he would find, on starting to work, that he was exhilarated, and the next thing he knew his entire allowance of time would have gone by and his attention been rapt.

This evening it was not until his eyes became tired and started flickering that a cloud began to gather. He finally went to bed in much the same state of mind in which he had been going to bed for several weeks. Sleep was impossible. He heard Oriana come in. She was very quiet. Probably by now she was fast asleep. He wondered if she, too, had been thinking about the little jaunt they had planned, and, if so, how much.

He repeated her words, "I know it isn't nice for a girl to ask a man to take her out." An observation like that cannot leave a man of twenty-two in a calm state of mind. He was in a fever of impatience for morning to come. Yet, at the same time, he shrank from it. Was she encouraging him? Did she expect him to propose? That he could not do without giving up his chemistry.

He had asked himself this question many times of late. It had been only in the last few weeks that he had thought of marriage; that is, in any concrete terms. All along, he had had a vague idea that some time he would have a wife and a home. Everything with him was in the future and dated from the time when he would have "made good." That he would go it alone until then had been an accepted condition.

But here Oriana had come along and entered his life. There was no doubt about it. He had thought of how he might marry her later; but he had also thought of how she would be very

likely to be married to some one else in the meantime. Then he wanted her, and he wanted her right away. And was it right for him to let her keep on working in a moving-picture theater and coming home alone late at night? She had told him much about her work, and he had met those with whom she worked. He knew that she was subjected to the company of coarse persons, and that her beauty made it difficult for her to maintain her quiet modesty. This she did, however, and so tactfully that she offended no one.

He had recently secured an increase in salary. If he were to give up the chemistry, they could make out and she would no longer have to work. But, oh, the chemistry! How could he give it up? Oriana wouldn't want him to. She had become as enthusiastic over it as he was himself, though it was all Greek to her. She believed him when he told her of his discovery, and how fame and fortune would surely be his some day.

He had used those words, "*fame and fortune.*" He had done so with the idea that they would be expressive without being too precise. But with him fame was nugatory, except that he would like it to be generally known among his acquaintances that he was striving after something big; and fortune, aside from the possibility of marriage, meant only the freedom for unrestricted research. The words, "*satisfaction in the work,*" he had thought would be colorless to a woman. But, after all, Oriana might have understood them. He had a feeling that she did understand, despite his fame-and-fortune phrase. But progress was slow, and books and materials expensive.

There was nothing new in all this cogitation. It had been the same each night. He told himself that he guessed he was facing the inevitable and that he would have to give up his study and have Oriana, if she would have him. He would decide in the morning.

Then, just as he was dozing off to sleep, there came, lightning quick, one of those deep visions that last but an instant and that come only a few times in one's life. In that flash he saw the truth. Of course, he would give up his chemistry and marry Oriana. It was the thing to do. All doubts were brushed aside as if they had been cobwebs. Life opened out anew and entrancingly. He had crossed the bridge at last and was in the pleasant fields.

Morning dawned, and he arose refreshed. At first the outlook was as it had been on other mornings. There was the same distinct path clearly before him. It was as if the side of his bedstead were the boundary between two worlds—that in which he really lived and that in which he sometimes wandered. Though he crossed over into the stranger one when he lay down to sleep, he found himself back in his old place when he awoke. The instant he would come to a sitting posture with his feet on the floor, all was again as it had been.

The thought of this caused him to recall the vivid outlook he had had. This time it remained vivid. He knew that he had seen aright. The time had come, the time he had thought about, but had not let himself look forward to. He went about shaving and dressing with extraordinary care, wondering, as he proceeded, if, odd as it seemed, fatigue hadn't its uses and if sometimes when one is exhausted, one cannot think most clearly.

In all the time he had known her, Oriana had never been more adorable than she was that morning. She wore a light gown of some thin material that exposed much of her arms and shoulders and in which the grace of her figure could not be hidden. She was a girl who was always beautiful, but it was when she smiled or laughed that she became irresistible. The regularity of her teeth and the way in which her face

would break into a radiant light—— It was indescribable! The daintiness of her ears and the neat way in which her hair was arranged at the back of her neck accentuated the fineness of her feminine delicacy.

The weather was ideal. The sun shone brightly, but not too warmly. Birds chirped and hopped about hunting for their breakfasts. Everything was in tune with a note of joyousness.

"What a glorious day!" she said.

He liked to hear her use those womanlike words—"glorious," "splendid," "perfectly dear." If a woman were to avoid such colloquialisms, half her charm would be lost. It is the license of the sex, a liberty no man may take.

They had reached the coast town almost before they knew it. The trolley ride there had never seemed so short to either of them before. They simultaneously started to speak of this. Their words collided and they broke off, laughing merrily.

From the car line, they walked to the beach. There were but a few blocks to go. As they passed a store, he became interested in a window display of sheet music. There was but one song. Innumerable copies of it were spread out and hung up, so that the picture on the cover appeared in endless repetition.

"Look at that, will you?" he said.

But she seemed to want to hurry on. He glanced back at the window to see what could so have affected her. Even then he might have gone on without knowing had he not, in turning, surprised a look of beatitude on her face. He stepped nearer to the window and made a close examination of one of the songs. At the bottom of the cover appeared the words: "Music by Oriana Gray."

"Oriana!" he fairly shouted. "To think—— Did you really do it?"

She stamped her foot petulantly.

"Pshaw, that's too bad!" she said.

"I wanted to tell you myself. But now that you've seen it, how do you like the looks of it? I can't give you an idea how it goes. There are too many people around."

He made no answer. He stood gazing alternately at the music in the window and at the glow of happiness on her face.

"Look in the other lower corner," she said. "See, 'Lyrics by Reginald Gray.' That's papa. He never could get his poems printed. Wouldn't he be happy if he could see this now?"

They walked on air and were at the beach in a twinkling. Neither had seen the ocean for months and it burst upon their vision suddenly, the waves rolling in and breaking and sparkling in the sunshine in the same old, familiar way. There was the same freshness in the air, the same slow, but ceaseless, booming and swishing of the water.

"Isn't it grand?" she said. "Come, let's go right down on the hard sand and walk till we get 'way off by ourselves. Then I'll tell you my secret."

"Why, wasn't it the song?" he asked.

She uttered a little trill of silvery laughter that made him want to seize her in his arms right then and there before everybody.

After they had strolled for a while, she said suddenly:

"So you thought my song in the window was the surprise? Well, it wasn't at all. It has something to do with it, but it isn't the real, big surprise. That's coming now. Do you feel equal to—almost anything?"

She stopped and opened her reticule and took out two small savings-bank pass books.

"I've opened a bank account," she said. "What do you think of that?" She put one of the books back into the reticule. "And," she continued, "I've opened one for you." She held out the other book to him. "It's all fixed in your name," she added. "All you'll



"Listen!" he interrupted, moving closer to her. "This is no time to talk of science!"

have to do is to go to the bank and give them your signature. And look at the figure," opening the book. "I guess that'll help along with your chemical work, won't it?"

He stood petrified. A feeling of deepest shame came over him. It fairly burned. This girl loved him so much that she would divide her hard-earned money with him that he might still more completely immure himself in a celibate retreat and pore over chemistry!

"Put it back," he said, pointing to the bag and swallowing hard. "Put it back till I can get out what I want to say. I'm all confused."

"No wonder," she hastened to explain, still holding the book, but drop-

ping her hand to her side. "I've put the cart before the horse. You don't understand. The song was only half mine. We collaborated. Only you didn't know you were collaborating. You whistled the air while I wrote it down on the other side of the wall."

He stared at her blankly.

"Oh, you look too funny for anything!" she said. "The song's already going all over town. I've been afraid you'd recognize it, and think I'd stolen it, before I could get the money from the publishers. I did so want to do it up this way. It goes like this."

She sang a few verses.

"Now don't you recognize it?" she asked.

"Never heard it in my life."



"Wait! I'll hum it without the words."

She hummed as they walked.

"No, it's new to me," he insisted.

"My goodness," she said, "you are absorbed in your work! And that isn't all," she continued.

"No? Is the world coming to an end?"

"I hope not—not for a while, anyway. I'm working on three other songs. You whistled them, too. At least, you gave me the ideas for them. They'll be hits, I know."

"I whistled them?"

"You did. You have the most extraordinary faculty for making up catchy new strains—and absolutely original—that anybody ever heard of. Why, it's simply wonderful. I had to be sly about it, though. A word and you'd have stopped. And to think you didn't know it at all! Another one goes like this. You whistled it over and over."

She pursed her lips to whistle, but he appeared so ludicrous in his amazement that she burst out laughing.

"Oh," she said, "it's too funny! I can't whistle and look at you. You'll have to turn your face away."

He complied, and she succeeded in tootling most of one of the compositions before she succumbed to another paroxysm of mirth. He also began to smile at the drollery of the situation.

"I do seem to remember a little of that one," he said.

"Well, then, you'll take the bank account?" and she again held the pass book out to him.

But he would not touch it.

"Maybe I did what you say," he said. "Still, that doesn't make the money mine. You composed the song. I know nothing about music. I decided last night to ask you to marry me, but now

that you're rich, and I'm still poor, I can't."

"I decided last night that if you didn't ask me, I'd ask you. And supposing I am a—*a Croesus*. If you won't take me, I won't take your tunes. Then all our good luck will fall to pieces.

"Think what it would mean for us besides"—she hung her head—"besides having each other. We'd be composers, don't you see? We'd have a good income, and with more money and time, you could rush the chemistry through quickly."

"I was going to give it up."

"Did you think I'd let you?"

"And you'd have me be a self-respecting husband and whistle for a living—and you do the hard part of the work even then?"

"Why not?" she said. "For a little while. Some people do worse things. I now play ragtime in a ladies' orchestra. And if you won't go into this partnership with me, I'll have to keep on doing it."

He had been walking with eyes contemplatively fixed on the wet sand at his feet. Now he looked up and faced her, head thrown back.

"Oriana," he said, "tell me one thing from the bottom of your heart. When I say that I know I am going to succeed, sooner or later, do you believe that I do know that I will? I don't want you to put faith in me unless you can positively feel that I know this, and that I am competent to know that I am not fooling myself."

"I know it better than you do, Philip," she answered softly, "and maybe I could even help you with the experiments. Why, from the standpoint of science——"

"Listen!" he interrupted, turning to see that there was no one behind them and moving closer to her till he felt a silken lock brush his cheek. "Listen! This is no time to talk of science!"



# Confession

By Thomas McMorrow

Author of "An Ambassador from Tennessee," "Opportunity," etc.

ILLUSTRATION BY E. C. CASWELL

**A rather startling confession it is. Whatever its effect, it won't put you to sleep.**

I AM a playwright and have been successful in my profession until lately, having recorded only one failure. I am a gentleman and a member of many clubs, including the Writers, the Squash and Bowls, and the Sunshine. In religious matters, I am not uninterested; I give to several charitable enterprises, and am a pewholder in beautiful old San Ricardo's, where I sit under that eloquent divine, the Reverend Pandolfo. I am forty-nine years of age.

In my time I have not been a recluse or an ascetic, but a man of the world like other men. My pride and the niceness natural to a literary artist have kept me from the more devastating vices, and I have not to reproach myself with any enormities. I have done one murder, and feel a twinge of regret in my retrospective moments for my dealings with certain women. This is the fruit of a Puritan ancestry.

If you will bear with me, I will relate to you the circumstances attending the murder of Henry Allen.

His sister Rosa is a beautiful girl who is quite lacking in temperament. Shall I say that she is bourgeois? The word is overworked, and perhaps it would indicate a lack of fine feeling to look

too closely into her nature, for I think I loved her at one time. She was beautiful, and that is distinction. Unhappily she was not content with this rare eminence, and wished to seek the bubble reputation—to paraphrase an elder dramatist—even at the footlights' mouth. She would be an actress.

She came to me for advice, and one does not dismiss a pretty woman curtly. I entertained a hope that she had latent talent, and I sought gently to open in her those springs of feeling whence the female artist draws her power.

The task held danger for a man of my ardent blood. I knew the present peril, but I had studied the physiology of love and believed that I could evoke it—or, rather, its atmosphere—without becoming myself infected. Art is the product of emotion; it does not flower except in the genial air of sensuous excitement. This is very true of women.

I spoke to her, in a soft voice, of our imperious mistress, Art. I pointed out to her the necessity to the neophyte of rising superior to the conventions which are the bogies of small minds. Together we read the poems of Oscar Wilde and of Mr. Swinburne, and the "Golden Book of Beauty and of Sense"—whose



Melodiously I chanted to her  
the stanzas of Omar.

popular title escapes me—and, sitting of evenings in sympathetic nearness, we read the "Rubaiyat." This latter poem is usually efficacious and indicated in these cases because of its sad abandon.

Rosa took to wearing chosen frocks when she visited me, and I will admit that her little feminine mannerisms and intonations were quite delightful. I remember one evening in particular. We had had a charming dinner, I recall.

She wore a gown of black lace net which set off marvelously the pale gold of her hair and the marble of her shoulders. We reclined upon the deep-piled couch, and melodiously I chanted to her the stanzas of Omar. Her head sank gradually to my shoulder, and her breath came in fragrant sighs.

Thereafter I was visited by her brother, an uncouth person with a proneness to violent and inharmonious

gesture. I had not grasped the futility of my hope for Rosa until I saw this lout. He came in the evening to my residence in Pelham, and I interviewed him in the library. The windows were open, for it was summer, and the room was heady with the scent of the roses in the garden outside.

The views of life and morals which he expounded to me were curious, and at first he held my interest. The concrete matter of his discourse was a "wrong" which I had done his sister. I denied it to him, as became a gentleman of sentiment and family.

But I am also a person of the nicest sense of honor, and his bearing and speech were continuing indignities. He threatened, snapped his fingers, ranted, perspired, and shook his fists in my face, in the broader melodramatic manner. He was obsessed by an idea that I could be induced to contract a marital alliance with his sister. This delusion was precious to him, and he was reduced to rage by my reiterated refusal.

"Then you will not marry her?" he cried in exhaustion.

"My dear fellow!" I remonstrated. He caught up his hat and went to the door.

"I have given you your chance," he said viciously, "and it will not come again. You will beg to marry her, and I will not consent to her marrying—a felon!"

I smiled, but his venom caused me uneasiness.

"What are you proposing?" I inquired.

"I am going to the police!" he shouted. "It is enough to say that my sister is under age!"

"You would do that for the sake of revenge?" His disregard of elementary decency shocked me. "But think of your sister, man. Think of her reputation!"

He flung open the door to depart. I caught at his stubborn sleeve.

"Listen, my fine blackmailer!" I said menacingly. "You offered to say nothing if I would marry your sister, and that is compounding my offense. Have you thought of that? Wait! Wait! Do you want money? A reasonable amount, now——"

"I want nothing of you!" he cried passionately.

Was there ever such an impossible fellow?

"Listen!" I urged. "It occurs to me that I may not have considered your sister's position in the proper light. Stay a moment, till I can collect my thoughts."

He returned into the room and seated himself like a block of stone. I paced the hearth rug, passing to and fro behind him.

Of course his demand was absurd. I could not take to myself a wife at the pistol's point, even were the lady all that might discreetly be desired. It would be dishonor. But also I owed it to my friends and my family name that there should be no vulgar scandal. The matter was difficult.

"Have you told any one of your purpose in coming here?" I asked. "If I comply with your wish, there must be no rumor of constraint. We must think of your sister."

"I have told no one," he said, with an impudent stare.

"Good!" I commented, rubbing my hands. "You have shown refinement of feeling there. And no one saw you enter the house but myself; I am sure of that. We will find a solution!"

I stopped at his chair and leaned over the back.

"Think well of this," I pleaded. "Think what it means to Rosa to be chained to a man who cannot respect her. We must not be selfish here. And if I refuse, will she not be crushed by the scandal? Look at the matter from her side, my dear fellow!"

"If you refuse, I will go to the police!" he said.

I had leaned over him in entreaty, and my hands were before his breast. I interlaced my fingers.

"I have spoken to you reasonably," I said with sternness. "Now let me have your last word!"

"Justice!"

I drew my palms up to his chin, jerked back with all my strength, and broke his neck expertly. This manner of garroting had been shown to me years before by the then prefect of police in Paris.

I lifted the body, bore it to the window, and cast it among the rosebushes. It was now past midnight, and I was very weary. I went yawning to my bed.

I was awakened in the morning by my valet, who was in a state of perturbation.

"There has been an attempt at robbery, sir!" he stuttered.

The episode with Rosa's brother did not recur to me at once, and I was apprehensive for my old family plate.

"Has anything been taken?" I asked tremulously. "What has been stolen?"

"Nothing has been stolen," he assured me. "The gardener found the robber beneath the library window, dead, his neck broken by the fall."

I understood the natural sequence of events, and dressed carefully to interview the agitated police, who were waiting belowstairs.

The police were as intelligent as the ordinary run, which is to say that they were capable of following a routine. This situation called for a novel conception, and it was beyond them. Such is the execrable result of the current system of preferment, which elevates men who do not make mistakes, to the neglect of genius, which is erratic. The system is not without its philosophy in a democratic age, as most men have

capacity only to continue a certain tradition of life.

I contented my respectful inquisitor with the assertion that the deceased was not of my acquaintance.

When the unfortunate man's identity was discovered, his family begged me to spare them notoriety, and to this I acceded.

My days continued in their even tenor, passed in hard work and honest endeavor, but soon the memory of the sad affair distracted me. I could not dismiss it, and it affected the quality of my work. It intruded itself by day, and at night it shook me from my sleep. The human mind was never meant for thought, for concentration unhinges it. I felt that I was growing morbid.

It occurred to me that I might ease myself by baring the business to a friend, and accordingly I spoke to Torrance, first putting him under a solemn vow of secrecy.

"I have noticed your queer behavior of late," he said, staring at me speculatively. "So this is the cause of it! Why don't you consult Hirschberg, the specialist in these nervous diseases?"

"You do not believe me?"

"No, I do not believe you," he said gently. "And I sincerely trust that you have not related this ridiculous farrago to any one else. You must see Hirschberg."

"You can readily be convinced!" I exclaimed angrily. "Will you speak to Miss Allen?"

He considered my request thoughtfully, and finally nodded.

"It is in every way an indelicate subject to broach," he said. "But if it will serve to rid you of this dangerous delusion, I shall certainly speak to her."

I saw him some days later.

"You saw Hirschberg?" he inquired.

"No, no!" I answered impatiently.

"Tell me, you spoke to Miss Allen?"

"At the peril of my life, I obliged



I took him by the coat lapels  
with shaking hands. "Doctor,"  
I said, "I will go mad!"

you there," he replied. "She denies the story with the greatest indignation."

I left him moodily, and my depression increased.

A secret unbelievable is untold, and it weighed on me. It irks that social animal, man, to possess a secret. He must confess. The psychology of confession has not been studied; the philosopher dismisses it as a protective device of the herd, and the mystic accepts it as an evidence of that spiritual malady which is sin. It is a real need, and no subtlety of argument can raise man above the vessel of flesh in which he is immured.

I turned to my art in this as in other troublings, and I cast the tale in the form of a playlet. The work was accepted, as was everything from my pen,

and I attended the first night with distinct relief.

From the shadow of a box, I watched the simple idyl enacted anew, from the meeting of the aspiring girl and the famous playwright to the inevitable tragedy. It was Greek in its relentless logic, it was convincing, and I was satisfied that my story would not be doubted when I answered the customary call for the author.

I stood before the curtain and calmly related the tale to the intent audience, using what powers of elocution and mimicry are in me.

When my voice ceased, there was a silence through the theater. And then some fool in the foyer clapped, and at once the audience joined him with



laughter. They understood that I had addressed them in the character of the fictitious playwright, and were grateful for the boldness of my compliment to their intelligence.

The critics were perverse. They said that the playlet showed a deterioration in my work, and that it sadly lacked realism and verisimilitude. They said that the bizarre was not my forte, recommended that I limit myself to the humorous, and pointed to that canon of their obstructive trade which makes the grotesque sacred to the memory of the late Edgar Allan Poe. They effectually killed the playlet, and it was hurriedly withdrawn.

I have been driven again and again to seek a confidant, often neglecting to secure a promise of secrecy. My friends begin to avoid me as a bore. Are they to blame? One does not seek the company of the man of one story. They whisper at times of putting me under restraint. I have had threats from the friends of Miss Allen, and I have been blackballed at an unimportant club.

This wretched business is ruining me, socially and financially, for I cannot restrain the impulse to tell and tell. If only some one would believe me! Justice! Is there none for me, a confessed murderer?

Hirschberg looked at me over his spectacles.

"You are suffering from melancholia," he said, "and the nature of your delusion is not uncommon. Do not approach the police again, or you will go to an asylum. You are quite as sane as I am, apart from your delusion. Frankly, it is the result of a long course of evil living. You must grasp that fact and fight against it. Yes, I know that you now believe it is true. They all say that."

I took him by the coat lapels with shaking hands.

"Doctor," I said, "I will go mad!"

"It is very possible." He nodded absent-mindedly. "Very possible indeed." He hastily corrected himself. "Unless, of course, you follow my instructions to the letter!"



## THE GAME

LIKE a childish game,  
I made my pulses beat at will to-day  
By just remembering the way  
You caught me to you when I laughed last night,  
And how you set your lips upon my throat  
As softly as a snowflake falls on snow;  
And when it was the time for you to go,  
How something hurt us sweetly, like the note  
Of some wood bird whose name  
We do not know.  
I thought that you might die before  
You came to-night to kiss me at my door.

Slow and fast, and fast and slow—  
Can you make your pulse beat so?

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.



# Alma Mater

By Ruth Herrick Myers

Author of "Columbia," "The Cheshire Cat," etc.

**A college commencement that changed Billy Hale's career,  
and proved that he was after all a son of his father.**

PROFESSOR HALE, still true to type, continued to wear a beard and old-fashioned round cuffs. The years had left unscathed the ideals with which he had stepped from his college platform. The white church spires of New England under which his Congregational forefathers had preached for generations were no more upright than his life had been through all the fires of youth and tests of manhood; the school bells summoning his morning classes were no more stirring than the spirit with which he had pointed each new generation, each new, changing—sometimes it seemed to him alien—generation, along the paths of his beloved science. To meet him on the street was to catch a whiff of the early eighties.

Billy Hale was slim, well groomed, smooth of face, and very up-to-date. He was of this new, seemingly alien generation, and the ideals of his forefathers were of about as much interest to him as a discarded eggshell to a newly hatched chicken. At least, so thought his father, rather bitterly. And a vision crossed his memory of the lad

as he had seen him only last week, driving some one's automobile at break-neck speed down the street. Whose car it was, how he had learned to run it, his father had not the faintest idea. There was something spongelike about the ease with which the boy absorbed these modern tricks, he thought. He went to dances and could strum the latest songs on a ukulele, and he had recently acquired a little brown pipe. But—and this had given Professor Hale the greatest of all possible shocks—Billy had announced two days before that he was going to quit school—he had even used the inelegant high-school term, "quit"—and go to work.

It was June, that month associated in Harvey Hale's mind with blue skies and warm sunshine and commencements and the green grass of his alma mater, with college seniors in caps and gowns, high-school girls in crisp white dresses, with flowers, diplomas, orations. Not a June since his own commencement day but he had sat upon a platform with some faculty, speeding a graduating class out upon its way into the new unknown. For ten Junes, it

had been in the Burns High School. For three years, Billy, his own son, had been among the students. This commencement he should have graduated, and the occasion was one to which Harvey Hale had looked forward as a little triumph for both himself and the boy.

"That's Professor Hale's son," people should have whispered in the audience, nudging one another. "His father's head of the zoölogy department."

To-day Professor Hale, turning to look at his son as the train sped through the brilliance of the June afternoon, had difficulty in wiping that vision from his mind.

They were on their way, he and Billy, back to Claxton for Harvey Hale's thirty-fifth commencement, and neither one was as happy as he should have been. Though he had ached to go along as many Junes back as he could remember, this was the first time that Billy had ever visited his father's college, the first time he had ever been asked. He felt now that the invitation had come too late. He felt that two weeks ago, when his father had suggested the trip, he had done so because he had just discovered that his son could not possibly graduate with his class. He felt that his father was trying to use a tactful method of shaming him, of saying, "See, this is what your father did when he was your age!" He was going to rub it in. He was going to heap coals of fire on the young man's head by being especially nice to him.

Resenting this attitude, Billy had promptly made up his mind to spring a counter surprise, and had accordingly announced his intention of quitting school altogether and going to work. What ailed the boy, Harvey Hale was at his wit's end to understand. He had always been a good student, even in some courses an enthusiastic student. Why suddenly, then, about the middle of his senior year, should this lapse

have occurred? It was not that his school work was too hard for him. Rather, the motive force seemed to have died within the lad. It was as if the mainspring within that made him go had snapped, as if his engine had gone dead. And yet, to all outward appearances, he was as fit as ever.

Harvey Hale looked across at his son helplessly and wondered what the boy's mother would have done with him. Women had more of a knack about such things, a way of finding the loose screw in complex human machinery and adjusting it and oiling it so that it would go again. One summer Harvey Hale had spent a vacation in the northern woods and, being inveigled into a fishing trip one afternoon, had experienced the startling sensation of a strike from an active, twenty-five-pound muskellunge. The chill impossibility of ever enticing such a gyrating monster into his boat by means merely of the frail line that bound them together had so overcome Harvey Hale that he had promptly and helplessly turned over the rod to his guide, refusing to shoulder any responsibility in the operation. He laid no claims to being a fisherman. And recalling the incident now, he wondered ruefully if he were going to prove as unsuccessful a father. If he could only turn Billy over to some one, before the lad snapped the slender tie that bound the two of them together!

Perhaps, if he showed more sympathy in the boy's plans, he could touch the spot. He turned to him with sudden determination.

"What line of work did you tell me you were planning to take up?" he questioned him over the roar of the train. But before the words left his lips, he realized that they were not tactful at all. Why had he not led up to the subject more gracefully? To blurt it out like a freshman!

Billy Hale shifted uneasily in his seat,

with a slight frown of irritation wrinkling his forehead.

"I didn't tell you at all, did I?" he countered. Then he pulled himself up sharply, remembering that, under any circumstances, he was his father's guest and that, in spite of everything, the courtesy of that position must be maintained. "You didn't ask me," he added. And that was not what Billy wanted to say, for he certainly did not want his father to imagine that he felt aggrieved over the omission. He wanted no pity. But Professor Hale had felt the rebuff and had stiffened. If the boy could not meet his simple overture in a pleasant spirit, at least there was safety in silence. His lips tightened. Let the boy make the next move.

Billy offered it, after a slight pause.

"I'm going to work for Kelly & Kirk, as city salesman."

"Yes? What is their line?"

Professor Hale had himself several summers sold schoolbooks for a publishing house. Perhaps there was to be a bond of sympathy here.

"They're a wholesale cigar house, and I'm to have the use of one of their cars to cover my territory."

"I see."

Professor Hale nodded slightly, and after a brief silence Billy turned back to the window.

The little town of Claxton was astir with its college's commencement. There were excited groups of people down to meet the train. Already they were piling their friends into waiting automobiles or buses that ran up to the college, or walking, many of them, carrying bags and suit cases, up the main street of the town, whose store windows were gay with the yellow and black of the college colors. A bevy of bareheaded girls called laughingly to a group of others who crowded the back platform of one of the antique little street cars. Claxton had become co-educational since the good old days of

'78 and '80, Professor Hale apologized to his son, explaining that it was the original intention of the founders to have Claxton for the young men and the female seminary, in an adjoining town, for the young women. However, that was neither here nor there. They were in now. We must make the best of them.

And Billy smiled a trifle in one corner of his mouth. There was going to be amusement of various kinds here, after all, he observed. Already his father was speaking to people right and left, his hat off half the time, his cheek bones that showed above his graying beard flushed with enjoyment. Billy was introduced a dozen times to men of his father's age whose hand-clasps were warm and genuinely affectionate; to a number of professors; to residents of the town. They dashed into a drug store to greet the call of a wizened little old man who had sold Harvey Hale his first bottle of ink thirty-nine years before, when he had been a lank, lonesome freshman. And by great good fortune, so Harvey Hale exclaimed, the first man they chanced to meet on the campus as they alighted from the little street car behind the chattering bevy of co-eds was William Prendergast, the college janitor, who was completing this spring his fifty years of faithful service. There was to be a demonstration of some sort made for William on Alumni Day, so Professor Hale whispered to his son as they hailed the old man and shook him hard by his thin, calloused hand. And indeed, after catching the light in William Prendergast's faded blue eyes as they fell upon this particular one of his hundreds of boys, Billy felt that the demonstration would be well placed.

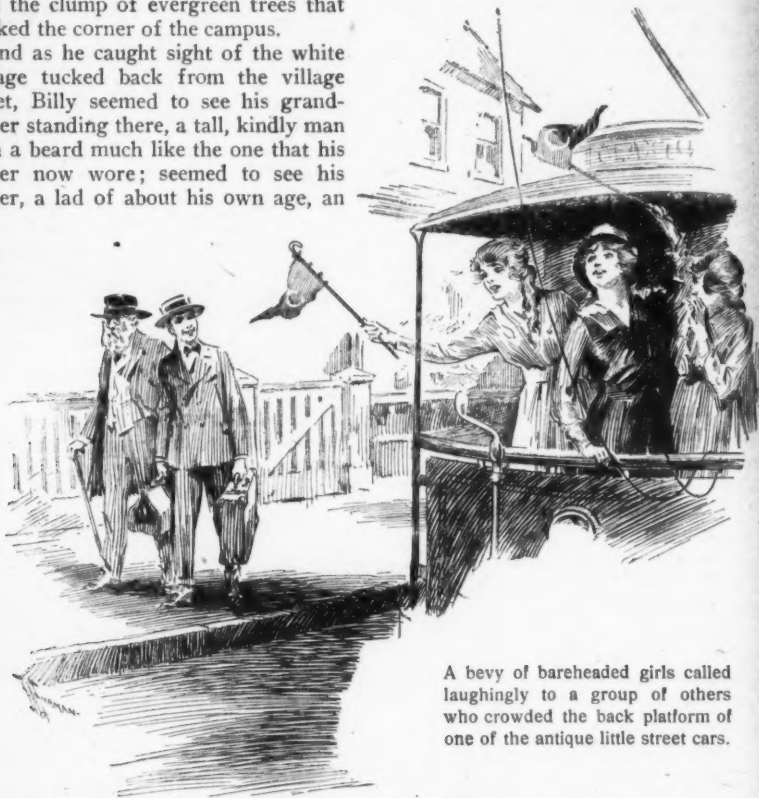
They told him, although Billy remembered this, that during most of his father's college years, he had boarded at William Prendergast's house. Those were in the days long before fraterni-

ties, before even dormitories were built. William Prendergast described the September morning upon which he had answered the doorbell and opened the door to admit the old minister and his son, who was that day entering college. That was the house, yonder, behind the clump of evergreen trees that marked the corner of the campus.

And as he caught sight of the white cottage tucked back from the village street, Billy seemed to see his grandfather standing there, a tall, kindly man with a beard much like the one that his father now wore; seemed to see his father, a lad of about his own age, an

father had had before him when he was a lad, before he had come a-pioneering west from Vermont to minister to the settlers in this new country.

"Suppose you'll be coming up soon?" William Prendergast inquired cordially. "Next fall?" he asked Billy.



A bevy of bareheaded girls called laughingly to a group of others who crowded the back platform of one of the antique little street cars.

awkward country boy, but eager and wide-eyed at this wonderful opportunity that was coming into his life. Billy had heard it all many times in years gone by—how the two had risen long before daybreak, hitched up, and driven twenty miles across country to enter the lad in the new college where he might have the opportunity that his

"Our plans," Harvey Hale interrupted hastily, "are a little indefinite as yet, William, a little indefinite."

"I see," heartily returned the old man, who had known so many boys. "I see."

And he shook Billy quite as warmly by the hand as they parted.

The incident made a curious impres-

sion upon Billy Hale. It seemed to link him with his father's past. From that moment, he felt much more of a kinship with the class to which his father had belonged than with the boys of his own age whom he saw thick upon the campus, felt more of the spirit of that early, more rugged time when his father had worked so hard for his education.

He also made a discovery within the next few days. He found that the ten other men, his father's classmates, were so like him in many ways that they seemed like brothers. Little characteristics, gestures, a certain half-humorous phraseology they used when they rallied one another as they did perpetually—all these stamped them with a sort of family resemblance, so that peculiarities which Billy had always thought characteristic of his father alone, he found now to be the mark of the college life which these men had lived mutually together during the plastic, impressionable years of their lives. And the high ideal of making the absolute most of one's best self seemed to be a sort of fundamental understanding among them. Nothing short of one's best was recognized.

One of these classmates, Professor Fairchild, his father greeted in a unique way that aroused Billy's curiosity.

There was no sign of recognition as the two met other than a lighting up of their faces, but Harvey Hale laid his hand quizzically upon John Fairchild's and inquired solemnly:

"Fairchild, how are your bones?"

"Promising, Hale, very promising. Come up. I want to show them to you."

For Professor Fairchild, it appeared, was curator of the college museum, and had become the enraptured possessor of some prehistoric bones which had been excavated recently in California, and which he was engaged in fitting together into their proper skeletons.

After due introductions to Billy, he

showed the two over his beloved, dusty museum from cobwebby attic to musty cellar, bones, bugs, and all. Billy, to his surprise, was fascinated by the place, largely, undoubtedly, because of Professor Fairchild's intense personality, which could make even bones and dust and cobwebs alive with interest.

He told them what difficulty he had had all the year in finding students to assist him in his work. The new generation was too—he threw up his hands—too rattle-headed—that was it—for any sort of fastidious work like this. There was so much to be done in fitting the bones together, yes, in classifying, for instance, his specimens of beetles. He showed them whole cases that had not been labeled, and sighed impatiently. Well, next year, perhaps, he could find some one who would do better. There was a chance here for some earnest young fellow almost to work his way through school by acting as the curator's assistant.

Billy liked Professor Fairchild better than any of the other men. He sat by him at the alumni dinner and heard more about the excavations and more about various scientific subjects as he and Billy's father talked. Billy found that Professor Fairchild held his father in very high respect. He consulted him continually about this matter or that, asked his advice, listened eagerly to new experiments in which Professor Hale was interested back in the city. They discussed Professor Hale's new textbook, which was already being put into high schools all over the country. Professor Fairchild said he considered it the most excellent elementary textbook ever published on its subject.

And when, after the toasts and speeches of the banquet, the business of the organization was transacted, and Professor Fairchild, rising, nominated Harvey Hale for president of the Alumni Association, when it was seconded by a dozen different voices and



unanimously carried and applauded, Billy Hale felt his face flush red with a queer mingling of pride and shame. He had never, especially of late years, regarded his father in just the light that he was regarded here, back at his old college.

As a matter of fact, Billy Hale was puzzled. He had been puzzled for several years, especially so for six months. He was in a state of uncertainty regarding many things, particularly himself, and he was more open to conviction than his father ever imagined.

It had been excessively warm, as was frequently the case during Claxton commencement week. The campus had radiated the burning sun until the clumps of fine old trees shading sections of the winding walks here and there had seemed like oases in a burning desert, and the buildings, the great, cool stone buildings, like veritable havens of refuge. But with evening the air had cooled. A storm was coming up. As Harvey Hale and his son entered Old South College, the dormitory where many of the alumni were putting up, it seemed almost incredible that a hall which had seemed so cool at noon could be so close and breathless now.

They climbed silently up the dim, long staircase that led to the rooms above, and Harvey Hale, bidding his son good night, went on to his own room down the corridor.

Billy unlocked his door and entered the long, narrow cell which had been the study room of so many students during the years that had passed. A single iron bed with a humpy mattress, an old dresser, a study table covered with green felt that looked moth-eaten from much contact with energetic elbows and was mottled with ink spots—this was the furniture. The student who had recently occupied the room had left behind a few pencil stubs and a well-coated pen; also a few scraps of paper scribbled with history memoranda.

It was too hot to keep on the light, and Billy, snapping it out, walked over to the window and looked out over the campus. Curving in a great bend around the foot of the hill that sloped gently down from the college buildings wound the river, on its way down the valley. The breeze blowing over the river was growing stronger and cooler. It swept the heavy trees time and again almost to the ground, so that their branches touched the grass; it blew fitfully in and out the window; it whistled through the keyhole and sucked out into the draft that was blowing the length of the long corridor outside.

Billy liked the tumult. It suited his mood. Ideas, ideals, of which he had heard so much to-day, were in chaos in the world, and he took a strange delight in seeing things other than himself rumpled at the whimsical fancy of forces stronger than they.

He had been brought up to this atmosphere of high ideals and lofty, if rather vague, ambition. He had always been taught the glory of making the most of himself, his best self. Long ago, when he had been a small boy, they had lived in a college town where his father had taught in the academy. It had seemed to him then the only life, this college life, this life of education, of things intellectual rather than material. Their home, his mother's early training, his father's morning prayers, all had seemed to point out the life for which he was destined, the life that led along the paths his forefathers had trodden before him.

Then they had moved into an overwhelming city, torn with countless conflicting forces. His mother had died. There was a housekeeper. His father taught in an overcrowded high school in a fairly cultured community, but one filled with vexing fraternity problems and complex social situations. As Billy grew up into this high school, he found there a very disparaging attitude to-

ward the paths of learning. He found that students who were good were apt to be considered grinds, that he was regarded as more or less of a highbrow, that his father wore old-fashioned round cuffs, an out-of-date beard, that he was just a school-teacher instead of a business man and a money-maker.

The other boys talked of the profits their fathers were making on the Board of Trade, on the stock market, of investments, of automobiles, of country clubs and golf. They seemed to regard college as a semi-joke, or as an agitated life of competing fraternities.

Gradually Billy had adopted the attitude of his colleagues. He learned to run an automobile. He bought a ukulele. He began to smoke. He learned to dance, to play cards. But although his father considered him the very bone and fiber of this new generation, Billy himself knew that he was not. Although he did smoke, he did not care greatly for tobacco, having acquired no taste for it from his father. He loved to dance, but he found the girls, his partners, rather uninteresting and shallow, and much preferred that they be silent, so that he might enjoy the music and rhythm uninterrupted.

He knew he was still regarded as a highbrow, as Professor Hale's son, the son of a school-teacher. In short, Billy felt that he was neither of the old generation nor the new. He was neither fish nor fowl, and he did not know what to do with himself.

A little thing about six months before had changed the current of his life. He had been struggling along, for several years now, trying to adapt himself to,



He wrote an editorial on the war. He worked hard on it, long into the night.

the difference between his training and his present environment and he had come up to his senior high-school year. He was registered in English with the head of the English department.

Billy, about this time, had decided to make a newspaper man of himself, a journalist, a war correspondent, thus

combining in a measure the demands of the old intellectual life and a more modern application of it. He wrote an editorial on the war. It was, so it seemed to him, a splendid thing, his masterpiece. He worked hard on it, long into the night. Its analysis was logical, its sentences well balanced. He was proud of it, and he handed it in with the sense of having accomplished something worth while.

When it was returned, it was marked 80. Five had been "taken off" for each of two commas which the instructor thought misplaced—though Billy disagreed hotly with his judgment. But—and this was what left the sting—no comment whatever had been made upon the contents of the theme, no word of commendation or encouragement for the work that so clearly had been put upon it. Billy felt that he might just as well have written a description of the trenches, copied from any one of a dozen newspapers or magazines.

What was the use, he asked himself. He would be a highbrow no longer. He would drift for the rest of his life with the tide of popular opinions and customs. There was nothing to digging and slaving for an education, as his father had taught him to believe. He would cut the whole thing out and go to work as some of the other boys were doing and hit the high spots with what money he earned. That was all there was to life, anyhow.

But—he stared out, frowning, into the storm that was sweeping the campus—the uncertainty, the conflict, had returned with the atmosphere of his father's college. He admitted to himself frankly that he liked this place. It appealed to him. And he could not argue himself out of a sure conviction that Claxton would like him. If only his father had not tricked him into coming! If he had chosen any other time in their two lives to bring him back! But now—now it was too late!

Setting his jaw stubbornly and undressing in the dark so that he should not shut out any of the breeze with the curtain, he went to bed and to sleep.

He woke to an ideal commencement day, a cool, sunny, ideal day of June. The campus, in its brilliant green, seemed especially decorated for the occasion, and a strange yearning came over the boy as he and his father watched the long line of graduates in their black caps and gowns march singing from the college chapel, down the winding walks, and over, just off the campus, to the old First Church where Claxton commencements had been held since first there was one. It was in this building that Harvey Hale had been graduated thirty-five years before, such a short stretch of years and yet so long!

They went in, he and Billy, following the graduates. Professor Hale had wanted his son to see the processional. But, once inside, the junior usher, in cap and gown, led Professor Hale up onto the platform among the guests of honor, while Billy seated himself in the audience to await developments.

It was the old, time-honored commencement of Claxton College. There were orations, flowery, fervid. There was music. There was an address by a well-known minister from the city. The graduating class rose, received the final words of advice and affection from their president, filed up onto the platform to receive their diplomas, filed down again, graduates.

A hush fell, an expectant hush. The president was announcing the honorary degree that Claxton was bestowing on a few of its honored sons.

"Harvey Simeon Hale, of the class of 1880——"

The rest was confused to Harvey Hale's son. He realized dimly that the college was conferring an honorary degree upon his father, in acknowledgment, so the president was saying——

But Billy did not hear it all. He was realizing at last why his father had invited him up to Claxton upon this particular commencement day, understanding what his father would have been too modest to admit—that he wanted his son, the last of his family, to be present to witness the triumph of his life's efforts.

A crowd surrounded Harvey Hale as soon as the benediction was pronounced. All the boys of his class were there to shake him by the hand and extend congratulations, many of the faculty, and a number of students who were using his textbook. At the end of the line waited his son, nervously.

The line moved up, one by one.

"I just wanted you to know," Billy blurted, stumbling on the words, "that I've changed my mind, father. I want to come up to Claxton next year. Do you think, if I make up my work this summer, Professor Fairchild will let me work with him next year and help put myself through?"

Harvey Hale gripped his son's hand. How had this miracle been accomplished? Then, suddenly, he understood. And he sent a swift prayer of thanksgiving upward for this college mother who had stepped into the vacant place of the lad's own mother; this alma mater, who, with ever-outstretched arms, had reached out to claim her newest son.



## TWO WAR WOMEN

GRANDMOTHER, knitting in the sun,  
 Scarce marks the stitches as they run  
 From off her needles thin and bright.  
 Granddaughter, sitting by her side,  
 Clasps her long needles, full of pride,  
 But watches narrowly her row  
 So quick astray do stitches go,  
 So hard to make their madness right.

Grandmother's eyes grow vague with dreams.  
 She looks across that gay young head -  
 And sees another lass instead.  
 The light of love and valor beams  
 On the young soldier at her arm,  
 Clasp—it might have been a charm—  
 A knitted purse, a soft thing, slim,  
 Not practical—her gift to him.

They laid it with him in the clay  
 Where jasmines wept their flowers, that day.

Granddaughter sits erect and bright  
 To have a puzzling point set right.  
 And sees upon the withered pink  
 Of that old cheek a tear ablink.  
 Her young eyes widen, darken, blur,  
 Her woman heart is born—astir.

O God, shall there be tears for *her*?

EWING HALL.

# *The Making of a Slacker*

By Winifred Arnold

Author of "Mrs. Radigan's Picnic," "April Fool!" etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. B. ASPELL

**"It's a dangerous thing for a woman, even a mother, to get between a man and his conscience."**

C OUSIN STEPHANIE RAYMOND—in spite of my status as paid companion, she always courteously stresses the relationship—Cousin Stephanie Raymond considers herself the most perfectly devoted mother that ever lived. Hasn't Jack been the one great interest of her life ever since his father, Robert, died when Jack was just a little fellow? Hasn't her every thought, she would ask you, been for his comfort and pleasure? What better proof could one ask?

And of course it never enters her head that, in return, she has expected every thought and act of Jack's life to center around her. In fact, she would be perfectly horrified if anybody suggested such a thing; for of course Stephanie sincerely thinks, too, that she is absolutely unselfish—to the point of self-sacrifice, in fact. Women like that always do.

She used to pose very prettily about the matter of Jack's marrying.

"How I wish Jack would find the right girl and have a dear little home of his own!" she used to say. "But the dear boy is so devoted that he says nobody else can ever have first place with him as long as I live. And of course he knows how horribly lonely I should be without him, though I would gladly sacrifice myself. My deepest wish is to have him happy, dear boy."

I noticed, however, that a very queer look would come into Stephanie's eyes

when Jack began to show any real interest in some special girl; and twice, at least, she had had heart attacks and had to be taken away at once on long trips just when the rest of us suspected that Jack's thoughts were really turning seriously toward that "dear little home of his own." But that didn't interfere at all with Stephanie's effective attitude. Of course it might have been just a coincidence.

And then the Great War menaced, and at last really came to us. Could the pretty pose of absolutely unselfish mother love survive that? I wondered. For Jack seemed just the kind of man that his country needed.

But for a time, at least, she was quite safe. Jack's interest in the war was purely objective, like that of thousands of other young Americans. Of course we were going to raise a huge army and "show those Huns a thing or two," but he had no more thought of personal responsibility than if the war were being waged by the sovereigns of Timbaktu and Afghanistan.

So Stephanie continued to work for the Belgians and the Red Cross, sported wonderful silk flags, and talked beautifully about what we owed to our country and how we must all consecrate ourselves body and soul to the great cause of Liberty!

Then, all at once, Jack began to wake up—just as thousands of other young Americans were doing; and Stephanie,



"Some way I felt pretty low-down to-day as I stood with the rest, giving those fellows a send-off."

dropping phrase after phrase of her copybook patriotism, set herself with finished skill and diplomacy to the task of combating Jack's uneasy feeling that perhaps he wasn't, after all, quite "doing his bit."

At first they neither of them really came out into the open. Jack's conscience was, as I said, only beginning

to wake up, and his mother knew from long experience just the lullaby that would send it most speedily back to dreamland.

But one day, as Stephanie and I were having afternoon tea before the fire in the great living room of their place on Long Island, Jack came out from town full of a most unusual excitement. A



number of his special friends had just left for the officers' training camp; and with a new, resonant note in his usually lazy, well-bred drawl, he told us all about it.

"And Jim Bayes and Schuyler are married," he ended, "and Hollis Sanders is just engaged, and he was going to be promoted next month and nearly double his salary. Things like that—real sacrifices, you know—get under a man's skin, mother. Some way I felt pretty low-down to-day as I stood with the rest, giving those fellows a send-off."

He looked very boyish as he sat there on one arm of a wicker chair, watching his mother's face. Stephanie's hand tightened on the gray muffler she was knitting, but she did not look up.

"That is very fine of them, doubtless," she said evenly, "but isn't it, after all, the easiest thing for emotional men like them to yield to the glamour of the martial music and the flag and throw over the simple, humdrum duties of everyday? What would happen to the country if all the men with responsible positions did that? To my mind, it is far finer for a man to sacrifice his own feelings and stay at home and take care of his wife and children and carry on the real business of the country until she actually needs him at the front."

For a moment Jack didn't answer. He began to pace up and down the room, from the fireplace to the door and back again. Finally he stopped, with his elbow on the mantel and his eyes on the fire.

"Yes, mother," he said slowly, "I agree with you. It's no time for men with wives and families to go yet. The need isn't great enough. But that doesn't let me out. You certainly don't want me to be a slacker, mother! And here I am, unmarried, perfectly strong and healthy——"

"But thirty-two years old, Jack—a

year older than the men they're calling for—and the head of a most important business."

"Gregg could run the business perfectly well," interrupted Jack, almost impatiently, "just as he did after father died until I was twenty-five."

But Stephanie is wise enough to know when the time for argument is past. She just gazed at him with wide, pathetic eyes and her voice trembled pitifully as she went on:

"And with an old, feeble mother who adores you, whose very life depends on you—— Oh, my son, promise me, promise me that you will not think of leaving me—yet! It may not be very long now, dear, before you are free." Her voice broke and she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

Jack stopped his restless pacing and looked down at her. It was an effective tableau. Her carefully dressed gray head was bowed, but one soft white hand was stretched out toward him in a sort of blind beseeching.

A queer look came over his face. I couldn't help wondering if, for the first time in his life, a faint realization flashed through him of the iron grip which that same soft white hand held on his life.

But Jack is really an unusually devoted son, and that reference of hers to her delicate health touched him, as always, in his tenderest feelings. With an actual physical movement of the head, he shook off any possible disloyal thought and threw himself penitently upon his knees beside her chair. I could almost see him asking himself how he could be such a brute as even to think such a thing about the sweetest, the most unselfish little mother that ever lived.

"No, no, *carissima!*" he cried, taking her in his arms. "You mustn't talk like that! Of course I won't leave you—not until my country needs me more than you do."

It wasn't everything she had asked, of course, but it was a good deal, and Stephanie could trust herself to decide which needed him the more. So she raised her head with a pretty gesture of pride and rested her soft white hands gently on his shoulders.

"And then, my son," she said, "how glad, how more than glad, I shall be to give my all for my country!"

She kissed him softly upon the brow, like a sort of mother's accolade, before he rose, and began to talk quietly of other things. And he was more tender of her even than usual for the rest of that afternoon and evening. But somehow I began to be sorry for her even then. It's a dangerous thing for a woman, even a mother, to get between a man and his conscience.

I tried to say something of this to her the next morning, but she wouldn't listen to a single word and absolutely refused to talk about the subject. The one thing that she cared about just then was that the crisis she had feared was safely past and the matter happily settled. And she told me that, not being a mother, I knew nothing about mother love, thus putting me obviously at a disadvantage in the argument, though I shall never admit that a keen observer



The quick color that deepened the wild-rose flush on her cheek was an infallible signal that Jack's footstep had sounded somewhere.

mayn't know quite as much about a game as the people who are in the thick of it. Otherwise—why do they have umpires?

However, I made up my mind, then and there, to speak to Jack myself whenever the subject came up again. I couldn't think exactly how I could have intruded into so intimate a conversation, but I blamed myself for not having at least shown my colors, and I determined to make an opportunity next time, even at the risk of being horribly tactless.

But that "next time" never seemed to



"Oh, my dear children!" she cried. "You have come to tell me——"

come. We talked of the war, of course—intelligent people could hardly avoid the subject these days and have any conversation at all—but it was always in the most impersonal way, as if it were as many thousand miles away in feeling as it is geographically. I, for instance, had to learn from the newspaper when Jack's own chum got his commission in the engineers.

I think, however, that he told his mother, for once or twice I overheard bits of conversation between them that

sounded like it; and after these talks I noticed that a drawn, tense look seemed to be growing around Jack's mouth and Stephanie's eyes. Jack began, too, to be more and more away from home and to act more and more distraught when he was there.

The only times, in fact, when he seemed quite like his old self were when Stephanie was ill for two or three days. Then the strained look seemed to leave his face, and he gave up everything to devote himself to her till she began to

improve. I was almost surprised that she did not become a complete invalid at once—I almost expected it; but, instead, she visibly brightened—seemed gayer and stronger every day. I couldn't understand it, and I puzzled over it quite a bit. Then——

"Marcia," she said to me thoughtfully one day, "do you remember what Jack said about a married man's duty being at home? He agreed with me there, didn't he?"

I agreed; and then, after a long time, she went on, half aloud:

"I wonder if—perhaps——"

"If you had allowed him to marry Eleanor Burchard years ago," I supplemented rather tartly, as I caught the connection. "Yes, Stephanie, in that case, I think he might have felt differently now. Jack has an unusually strong sense of family duty—as you know only too well."

And for once I let myself look at her with all my contempt for her selfishness in my eyes. How could a woman so good as Stephanie really was in many ways be so wickedly blind in this?

But Stephanie did not meet my rudeness with her usual hurt look of dignified reproof. Instead, her manner was positively playful as she dropped her knitting and shook a pretty white forefinger in my direction.

"Oh, fie, fie, Marcia dearest!" she laughed. "How dreadfully behind the times you are, to be sure! Eleanor Burchard and Jack were nothing but very good friends—ever. But I won't conceal from you, Marcia, that there is a girl now—has been for a month or two. A very real girl, too, if I can judge by the way Jack talked about her when I was ill. And nothing, you know, dear Marcia, would make me happier than to see Jack happily married."

"It's little Eileen Wentworth, who's been staying over at the Morrises. Her mother used to be a friend of mine, and I'm thinking, Marcia dear, very seri-

ously indeed, of asking her over to visit me for a while—in memory of old times. She's just such a sweet, gentle, timid little girl as her mother was. Just the wife for Jack."

It was a new rôle for Cousin Stephanie—that of matchmaker, but of course I got the idea at once. Stephanie doesn't often pose before me alone. Anything was better than having Jack go to war, and if marriage would prove another bond to hold him at home—a bond for which she could not in any sense be blamed—why, marriage it should be, if Stephanie's powerful assistance could bring it to pass.

However, I never saw a marriage that seemed to need less of outside assistance. From the moment that Eileen arrived at Westgate, it was evident to all and sundry that she and Jack were absorbingly in love with each other. His devoted glance never left her when she was anywhere within seeing distance, and the quick color that deepened the wild-rose flush on her cheek was soon an infallible signal that Jack's footstep had sounded somewhere far beyond earshot of the rest of us.

It was a pretty thing to see—so pretty I could almost forget that it was this which had stilled the belated growing pains through which Jack's soul was rising, at last, to the full stature of manhood. But when I saw the happy relief that irradiated Jack's face whenever his mother signified her delighted approval of his choice, I could not forget that, through this very love of his, Stephanie was putting the finishing touches upon the selfish task that she had set herself—the incredible, wicked task of making a slacker of the son whom God had entrusted to her to raise to the noblest ideal of manhood he could reach!

And yet there it was going on constantly before my face—Stephanie tactfully throwing the lovers into each other's arms, smilingly urging upon Jack

the advantage of a speedy marriage—that she “might enjoy his happiness as long as possible”—subtly instilling her own selfish philosophy into the young girl's mind. And all with such supreme finesse that never, look as I might, could I see a place where I could break one thread of the web she was spinning. Especially as no definite announcement of an engagement had been made.

I was looking hard for an opportunity one day as Stephanie and I sat once more at tea time before the living-room fire. It was one of those cold, rainy days that August sometimes gives us, and the dancing flames and the tea wagon with its steaming pot looked singularly inviting. We were waiting for Jack and Eileen, who had gone for a walk in the rain; and we had mentioned some man who was in training.

“Stephanie,” I began abruptly, determined to do or die at last, “I wonder how you dare—I wonder if you realize——”

“Oh, here they are!” interrupted Stephanie lightly, and as she spoke, Jack and Eileen came through the garden door. Their clothes were dripping with rain, and Eileen's hair was hanging untidily about her neck, but something wonderful and “set apart” seemed to me to envelop them as they came toward us hand in hand.

“Oh, my dears! You are soaking! Come and dry yourselves by the fire,” began Stephanie, and then she, too, caught the light in their young faces. “Oh, my dear children!” she cried, rising to her feet and holding out her hands. “You have come to tell me——”

“Yes, mother.” They were standing in front of her then, and to my surprise, there was no smile on Jack's face as he answered—no smile, only that wonderful light. “We have come to tell you that I am going to war. I have my commission as an engineer, and as soon as possible, I shall go for my training.

I didn't want to tell you until it was absolutely sure.”

Oh, the indictment in those simple words!

“But, my son—but, Jack——” Stephanie swayed as she stood, and Jack, stepping swiftly forward, lowered her into a chair. “I thought that Eileen and you—Eileen and you——” She glanced piteously from one young face to the other.

Jack stepped back and clasped Eileen's hand again in his—very proudly, very tenderly.

“Yes, mother,” he said, “it is Eileen and I—Eileen and I always after this, thank God! But, oh, mother, don't you understand, *can't* you understand what such love as ours means to us? How could I hold her in my heart as I do and stand back and let other men have the honor of fighting to protect her and my country? No man could love a girl like Eileen and be a coward and a slacker! That's what real love does!” The noble man that Jack was meant to be shone through his transfigured face.

But it was, after all, gentle little Eileen who surprised me most.

“And, oh, Mrs. Raymond,” she cried, clasping her two hands with Jack's between them, like a little Joan of Arc, “nobody could love Jack as I do and not be glad and proud that he wants to go and fight the wrong—my brave, brave knight!”

Her voice trembled as she spoke, but the gallant little smile that she turned upon her lover did not even quiver till he hid it on his breast.

I could not speak—and, anyway, it was not my place to speak just then—but over and over in my heart there lilted those brave and immortal words of an older day:

I could not love thee, dear, so much  
Loved I not honor more.

That was what I had read there, in those two uplifted young faces.

# Consequences

By L. H. Robbins

Author of "The Merlin-Ames Torpedo," "Horace Yomans' Last Story," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

"Life is a game of consequences."—Robert Louis Stevenson.

A Two-Part Mystery Story, full of life and feeling.

## WHAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.

Harry Loveland, son of the millionaire, Luther Loveland, is mysteriously shot one evening on the main street of his home town, Wells Lake. Although both the villagers and the summer people are out in force, waiting for the distribution of the mail, the street is dark and the shot is at first taken for the back fire of an automobile. The murder is not discovered until a Mr. Jessup, returning to his automobile, which is parked among a number of others, finds the body almost under his wheels. While there are apparently no clues to the murderer, there are only too many suspects, as both Harry and his father have lived selfish, dissipated lives and have numerous enemies. In the first place there is Bushnell Parwin, better known to baseball fans as "Bush." Bush is the brother of Harry's wife, Paula, from whom Harry has been trying to get a divorce. Paula, a gentle, devoted little creature, who has lost her health as a result of giving birth to a son, still clings to the hope that Harry will return to her, but Bush is furious at the methods Harry is using to get the divorce and has come to Wells Lake to give his brother-in-law a piece of his mind and if necessary a beating up. He is in town at the time of the murder. Then there is John Benvil, husband of Bertha Benvil, a gay young matron to whom Harry has been making violent love. Benvil, a quiet, elderly man, has begged his wife to be careful for the sake of their little son, but to no effect. Benvil is known to have arrived for the week-end just before the shooting. Bertha's sister, Maisie Kenton, is under suspicion also. She has lately seemed to be competing with Bertha for Harry's attentions, though always before she had been bitterly opposed to him. Just before the shooting she left her party in a store and went out, to speak to Harry, she said. Tom Dolan, the town policeman, has most reason to suspect Maisie. His brother, "Kid" Dolan, in washing the car that had stood in front of the Jessup car, discovers what he takes to be spots of blood on it, and Tom finds under the seat a woman's handkerchief with the initials M. K. Neither speaks of these discoveries. Both are feeling sore and angry because Tom has been discharged from his position in the first burst of indignation over the escape of the murderer, and because the great detective, Deering, whom Luther Loveland summoned at once, has rather scornfully rejected the aid of the country policeman. Tom and Kid resolve to do a little detective work on their own account.

## PART II.

### CHAPTER XVII.

IT was Sunday, so the Hamlins were not at church. Screeches and war whoops from the beach told that the younger inmates of Gray Boulders Camp were ducking one another in the lake. Somewhere in the house a pianola tore through "Tannhäuser" on the high. The Misses Dorothy and Helen Hamlin were seated on the lawn, drying their

yellow hair in the sun and matching pennies to kill time. Mrs. Hamlin reclined, knitting, in one of the seventeen hammocks for which the Hamlin camp was famous, while her lord and master sat in a rustic chair near by, wearing on his head a little white cloth hat such as sailors affect and trying to look as dignified as if it had been his tall silk one. Some of the hot-weather citizens of



Wells Lake left their dignity in cold storage in the city, but Mr. Hamlin brought his along with him every year. Perhaps it helped him to forget that he weighed less than his wife.

"Who's that?" asked Mrs. Hamlin suddenly.

"Who? Where? What?" asked Mr. Hamlin, looking around.

"Out there, talking to Otto. Is it another detective, do you suppose?"

"I'll see about this, by Heaven!" cried the wealthy little coal magnate of Milwaukee. "I'll not have the Sunday peace of my camp disturbed by these people! We didn't murder Loveland!"

Across the lawn he waddled to the garage, while the pianola in the house cut out its muffler and attacked the overture from "William Tell."

"Who are you, my man?" demanded Hamlin. "What are you doing on my premises? Are you a detective?"

"I was a sort of one till last night," answered Tom Dolan. "Now I suppose I'm only a private citizen. I used to be the town policeman."

"Oh, yes. I didn't know you in those clothes. What do you want?"

"I came out to see what I could learn about the movements of your car on Friday night."

"You ought to come to me instead of snooping around among my help," said Hamlin. "I talked to two of you fellows yesterday afternoon. I told them I left the car in front of the post office and took the kids to the movies till the mail was open, and that's all there is to tell. I don't care to be dragged into this scandal in any way, shape, or manner."

Big Tom Dolan had to smile at the little man's pomposity.

"But this is a serious matter, Mr. Hamlin. You say your car stood empty in the street at the time of the killing?"

"I tell you I've talked with Deering's men and I'll not talk any more. If you want any information, go to them."

With this, Mr. Hamlin went back toward the house, holding his head so high that he missed seeing a flowerpot in his path and tripped over it.

"Damnation!" said he.

"Howard dear," chided his wife, "remember this is Sunday."

Otto, the Hamlin man of all work, grinned to Dolan in the safe shelter of the garage.

"The boss has told you all there is to tell," he confided. "Them Deering sleuths, they put microscopes all over the car, but it didn't do 'em no good, because the old machine had just been washed. The boss didn't tell 'em any news, either, more'n what he told you."

"Thanks," said Tom. "What's the matter with your hand?"

"Felon on my thumb," said Otto. "This here bandage looks like a catcher's mitt, don't it? By the way——"

"Been laid up with it long?"

"'Bout a week. But say——"

"Then that was why Hamlin had the car washed in town?"

"Sure. I ain't done a lick of work since last Sunday. But as I was going to say, speaking of catchers' mitts, do you know who's hanging around in this tank town?" Otto, be it understood, was a metropolitan for nine months in the year.

"Who?" asked Tom.

"Bush Parwin! Yes, sir, I seen him twice with my own eyes—once on the hotel porch last Tuesday, reading a sporting page, and once out here along the camp road Wednesday morning, cutting him a cane out of a bunch of saplings. With my own eyes I seen him."

"Bush Parwin? Who's he?"

"Holy Mike!" cried the pitying Otto. "Where you been living the last two years not to know who Bush Parwin is? Jee-rusalem, man! Bush Parwin's the best infelder in America! He has as good as cinched the pennant for the Goliaths, though the season ain't half

over yet. And you never heard of him! Such is fame!"

"I don't follow the big leagues any more," said Tom, "since I got a little league of my own at home."

"Well, sir, I was so jarred at seeing him out here in the woods," Otto declared, "you could have knocked me down with a slap on the wrist! What do you s'pose a five-thousand-dollar shortstop like him wants to come out to this jumping-off place for?"

"Scouting for the Goliaths, maybe."

"Around here? Good night!"

"What's the matter with around here?"

"Well, of course that's where they get 'em," Otto admitted. "They found Bush Parwin at a milk station somewhere in Kentucky. Anyhow, he's in town here, and the next time I see him, I'm going to step up to him as bold as a club owner and ask him for a comp to the world's series games this year—that is, if there's going to be a world's series, which it looks like there ain't," Otto added mournfully. "Dog-gone this war, anyhow!"

Tom Dolan sauntered back to town with a lightened heart, marveling at the speed with which the Deering Brothers, Detectives, Incorporated, had gotten to work on the Loveland case, yet chuckling a little as he thought of a woman's handkerchief in his pocketbook.

"The Kid certainly did a crackajack job of washing on that running board," he said to himself as he came to Doctor Galloway's gate.

The doctor was taking an old man's Sunday rest under the shade of his famous feather-duster elm and feasting his eyes on his garden of phlox and hollyhocks.

"Hello, Tom! Have a chair."

"Thanks, doc. I won't stop but a minute."

"It was too bad they let you go, Tom. I fought 'em on it like a bear cat. So

did Steve Sikes. But we were two against five. You saw how it was."

"I know, doc. Thanks for trying."

"I've thought since," said the old physician, "that if they knew how popular you are with Lute Loveland, they'd reconsider their action. He thinks a heap of you, Tom, after Friday night. He was telling me this morning. You broke the news to them so gently that Mrs. Loveland stood the shock. Lute can't forget it. Queer, too," the doctor mused, "after all the shocks he has given her himself."

The two men thought of the Lovelands' family story, each of the part that he knew—of the rich man's neglect, of the wife's patient courage through years of heartache.

"I can't stop longer, doc," said Tom at last. "My dinner's waiting. But I wish you'd do something for me, on the quiet, as a personal favor."

"Anything on earth, Tom."

"Here's a paper with some dust and stuff wrapped up inside. I wish you'd look at it through your microscope some time and see if there's any human blood in it."

The doctor's eyes twinkled.

"Have you found a clew, Tom?"

In the words, friendly though they were, Dolan heard the old, familiar kind-hearted ridicule of the village for its police officer.

"Great detectives never talk," laughed Tom, and the doctor laughed with him.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Daniel Deering, most illustrious of private detectives, sat in his room in the Grand Palace Hotel on the evening of the day he had arrived in Wells Lake. Luther Loveland had invited him to stay at the mansion on the hill, but Deering had declined; he would need to be in hourly touch with his men, three of whom he had brought up from the city to help him on the case. In



"Here's a paper with some dust and stuff wrapped up inside. I wish you'd look at it through your microscope some time and see if there's any human blood in it."

the hotel, then, he had established his headquarters.

As he sat at the pine-board table that Hiram Gifford had provided, his eyes were half closed and his brow was furrowed. Any one could have told that he was indulging in that process of mental concentration that had made his name feared by evildoers everywhere.

A loud thump sounded at the door, and Mr. Deering, startled from his trancelike abstraction, jumped violently.

"Come in!" he called.

The door opened, and the seedy figure of Lem Vroom stood before him. Lem was the Wells Lake hackman and the town character. In a rattletrap carriage, drawn by a bony old mare that he called Spavinia, he had met almost every train that had pulled in from

Lambert Junction in thirty years. But the automobiles of his enterprising competitors had left him far behind in the running, and his fondness for distillery products had finished what his lack of business sense had begun. Blinking in the light of Deering's lamp, he shuffled across the threshold and closed the door softly and mysteriously.

"Hisht!" he said, raising a warning finger. "Are we alone?"

"What do you mean by banging on my door that way?" the detective challenged.

"Fell over hole in matting," said Lem, and bent down to examine his rusty old shoes as if expecting

to find them injured. "Look there, will you, where I almost tore my sole off? Dishgrace to shivilized c'munity, thish hotel!"

He looked to Deering for sympathy, but that gentleman's face was hard.

"What's your business?"

"My bishnish," replied Lem thickly, "is hacking. Drive you anywhere in the county limits with neatness an' dispatch. Funeral parties shpecially—hic—'commodated. Motto, 'Safety first.'"

"No, no, what's your business here in my room?"

Lem shaded his eyes with his grimy hand and peered into the corners, then under the bed, whereon lay Mr. Deering's coat, collar, and tie, and lastly under the table, which was covered with a litter of papers.

"Are we alone?" he asked again. "We are. My p'ception tellsh me so. Then listen to me. You're old Dan Deering, greatestht detective on earth, ain't you? They told me you was here. Well, I've got something to whisper in your ear."

"Hurry up, then. I'm busy."

The town hackman drew nearer to Deering and, leaning across the table in an attitude of affectionate confidence, said impressively:

"Never hurry, Mr. Deering. Hurry killsh more good men than all the hard work in thish world. I'm telling you the hones' truth."

Deering's patience was worn out.

"Come on, man! What brought you here?"

"What brought me here?" Lem bent over and studied his feet, then straightened up and favored Mr. Deering with a boozy wink.

"You're drunk," said Deering.

"Greatestht detective on earth!" cried Lem. "They ain't one man in a thousand could tell I was drunk. No, sir, not one in a million. Lemme shake your hand, sir."

These friendly advances gave the greatest detective on earth much pain, which fact he demonstrated by springing up and striding to the door.

"Once and for all," he said, opening the door, "what do you want?"

"Mr. Deering, I may be drunk," replied Lem solemnly, "but when I'm drunk, I can think faster'n any other man alive. I'm very rapid thinker when I'm under the influence. I'm in the two-twenty class, and don't you forget it. Maybe I'm only the poor old village hackman"—here he burst into tears and mopped his eyes with his battered felt hat—"but when I get a little alc—hic—ol in me, my mind worksh like lightning. I'm philosopher and schien-tist combined, sir. I can settle the weightiesht problems of human life with one hand tied behind my back."

The detective made a menacing movement, and Lem hastened to say:

"Mr. Deering, you're inveshtigating the Loveland murder, ain't you?"

"I am, but I can't waste my time with bums like you. Out you go!"

With a quick and expert rush, Deering sent Lem Vroom staggering into the dark hall. Slamming the door, he listened for a moment to Lem's maudlin comments on his ill treatment. By and by a heavy bump sounded from somewhere below, followed by a yell.

"He found the stairway, all right," said Dan Deering to himself, and resumed his concentration.

This time he assisted his mental processes by pacing restlessly up and down the room. An observer might have thought that he seemed like a spider weaving a web.

At the table he paused and picked up a bundle of letters. These were the love letters that Luther Loveland had found in Harry's desk.

"From his wife!" Deering muttered, and flung them down. His manner indicated that letters from a man's own wife are of little value in the detective business.

After another turn up the room and down again, he pulled his chair to the table and reread the first of the letters. Sweet and womanly it was, full of tender pleading and free from reproaches. It ended with, "Your loving, trusting Paula." Thus with all the letters until he came to the last. It had been posted in New York on Sunday of that week, and it read:

HARRY DEAR: Do you remember three years ago? It was three years ago this month that we made our triumphal entry into Wells Lake—a bright memory to me. Your mother and father were so kind. Everybody was kind. I think it was the happiest week of my life.

It was cooler in Wells Lake three years ago than it has been in New York this week. Our little boy has suffered from the heat a good deal, but we keep the flat dark for his sake and fan him day and night. You would

love him, Harry, if you could see him. He is such a dear baby. Mother and I think he'll be a big man like his Grandpa Loveland, though he looks like his Uncle Bushnell sometimes. So we shall have to wait to see till he grows up.

That reminds me, Harry. You know I wrote you that Bushnell is going to France, but he has gone out to Wisconsin to see you first. If you see him, tell him that sonny and I want him to come home at once. And be kind to him—won't you, Harry?—and make allowances for his temper, because baseball players have to have high tempers, you know, or the umpires would rule against them all the time.

Harry, dear, I love you just as much as three years ago—and more—and I know I could be well and gay for you again if you would only ask me to be. I'm waiting till you come for me, dear. Sonny sends his love with mine. Your faithful, PAULA.

Deering read the third paragraph of the letter through again. His watch on the table showed nine o'clock. Slipping his coat on, he opened the door, descended the stairs, and found Hiram Gifford lugging in the chairs from the piazza and closing up for the night.

"I'd like to look over your register."

"There it is on the desk. Help yourself," said Hiram. "Only don't shut it up, because that's bad luck."

Deering ran his eye down the columns of signatures. There were so few that he had to turn back only one page to find the name he sought.

"B. Parwin, N. Y."

To the landlord Deering said: "What sort of a chap is this Parwin? Maybe I know him."

"Parwin?" Hiram was interested at once. "That's the little geezer that wanted the shower bath and the punching bag. Comical little cuss, no bigger'n a minute. No, I don't know what he's here for. Just a summer towerist, I reckon. Anything odd about him, you say? Gosh, mister, he's odd all over! He wants shower baths and punching bags, he won't eat pie, and he hollers for roast beef three times a day. But maybe he's a friend of yours?"

"He came on Monday, I see. Is he here yet?"

"I guess he is. I'll go up and see, if you say so."

"Don't," said Deering. "Have you noticed anything else peculiar in his actions?"

"Well, I don't know if you'd call it peculiar or not for a hotel guest to take the feather mattress off his bed and stand it up in a corner of his room, and then fight it with a hickory club till he'd ripped a hole in the ticking and scattered the feathers all over the place. Maybe you wouldn't call that sort of actions peculiar. Maybe it's the fashion to treat feather mattresses that way in the great cities. But, anyhow, that's what this here little Parwin did."

"When was this?"

"Last Thursday night. He made such a rumpus a-doing it that a drummer in the next room came down here and kicked. But I have to hand it to this young mattress destroyer that he was a gentleman about it. He paid me five dollars and kept the mattress. Lord knows what he wants with it. I don't."

Deering went upstairs and paused before the door of room twelve. From within came strange sounds—a hand-clap followed by a thump, then another hand-clap followed by another thump, the succession repeated indefinitely and accompanied all the while by sounds of deep breathing. By and by the noises inside changed to a stamp and a shuffle, a stamp and a shuffle, repeated over and over again, until they ended in a lusty exhalation of breath and a distinct "Whew!"

The detective returned to his own room. Scarcely had he sat down at his table when a soft double knock sounded at his door and two men entered. The first, who was stout, florid, and evidently suffering from the heat of the July evening, shed his coat, loosened his belt, and rested his weight cautiously on the bed.

"Chief," he said, "you know Mr. Sanders?"

Deering looked over the other newcomer. Mr. Sanders was tall, sallow, and crowlike. He wore a broad-brimmed black hat, a Prince Albert coat, and a black string tie.

"Sanders?"

"Yes, sir. I met you at Mr. Loveland's to-day. I'm his local attorney, you know. I was just telling Mr. Drummond, here, of a little incident that occurred in my office last Wednesday. Mr. Drummond thought I ought to tell it to you."

"Go ahead."

#### CHAPTER XIX.

Mr. Sanders, after waiting a moment for an invitation to be seated, helped himself to the only spare chair in the room and sat down.

"As the legal guardian of Mr. Loveland's affairs in Wells Lake," he began, with dignity and deliberation, "I naturally am keenly interested in this murder case and in your efforts to run the cowardly assassin to earth. In fact, sir, I should not be true to my obligation to my lifelong friend, the stricken father, if I failed to assist those efforts with all my might and power."

Deering drew a deep breath and waited.

"In the conference which occurred in the Loveland home to-day, I was not consulted, as you may remember. Nevertheless, I feel myself in duty bound to contribute whatever clues I can toward the ferreting out of this unspeakable crime. Mr. Loveland, senior, has been, as I say, my lifelong friend—"

"I understand all that," Deering interrupted. "Get on, please."

"As Mr. Loveland's confidant and counselor," Mr. Sanders proceeded, a little more quickly, "I enjoy a high standing in the community, and my professional reputation may perhaps exceed my deserts. Whether or not I

merit my good repute as a practitioner before the bar, the fact remains that I am sought out frequently by strangers who desire legal advice—more frequently, it may be, than any other attorney in the vicinity."

Deering looked at his watch.

"It was no new thing for me, therefore, when a strange young man—a summer boarder in our midst, I presume—appeared in my office last Wednesday, just before the noon hour, and, placing a ten-dollar bill upon my desk, requested me to supply him to that amount with advice upon a question which he desired to propound to me. Upon hearing his question, however, I returned his ten dollars to him and told him firmly that my professional services were not at his command. There may be lawyers in this town who would consider a fee of ten dollars a long time before rejecting it, but my decision was instant and unalterable.

"Well, sir, since that time I have wished that I had listened to the young man a little longer and drawn him out. I listened long enough, at any rate, to enable me to offer you some slight testimony that may lead to the clearing up of the mystery—a mystery, sir, that has paralyzed our once happy community and cast its shadow over the hearts of one and all of us."

"In the meantime," suggested Deering, as a smile flickered around his mouth, "the precious hours are passing."

"True. I am glad you remind me," agreed Lawyer Sanders. "To be brief and to the point, then, and to conserve your time—for I have seen enough of criminal matters, I hope, to know that time in a case of this sort is extremely valuable—I was seated in my office last Wednesday, just before the hour for going home to dinner, as I say, when this young man of whom I speak entered my door. He was a short, well-knit young man, and his eye was re-



markedly keen. In fact, now that I have had time to think the matter over, I should say that his eye was altogether too keen for any good. It may be that behind his bright eye a murderous intention lurked, though I gave no thought to that possibility at the moment. I was occupied rather in looking at the young man's attire, which was extremely loud, if you will pardon the slang. There was something racy about his entire get-up that impressed me unfavorably at once."

"What was the question he asked you?"

"He asked me, without any preliminaries, how far a man could beat up another man in the State of Wisconsin without spending the remainder of his days in the penitentiary. I asked him to repeat the question, for I was so startled that I comprehended it but poorly. He put the question to me again, employing some such language as this. I quote:

"'You have probably been a mouth-piece for crooks, Mr. Sanders. How much beating up can I give a man and get off with a cash fine?'

"Those were his identical words, sir. I asked him if he contemplated committing assault and battery, and he replied that he did.

"'In that case,' said I, 'you should take your question to some member of the bar who is more in need of ten dollars than I am.'

"'With that, sir, he remarked upon the weather, bade me good morning, and left my office, jauntily swinging a large cane or walking stick, which, I noticed, had lately been cut from its native timber.'

"You didn't ask him his name?"

"No, sir; but I have seen him about our streets at various times since, and last evening, as I entered my friend Luther Loveland's gate to pay a social call, I observed the young man idling in the neighborhood and apparently watch-

ing the Loveland house. He had his cane with him."

Deering considered the information a moment.

"Thanks, Mr.——"

"Sanders, sir—Gurley P. Sanders."

"Your tip may be worth something, Mr. Sanders. Meanwhile, keep mum, will you?"

"I shall place a seal upon my lips until you bid me speak, sir. In the meantime, it will be a pleasure to me to think that I may have been instrumental in aiding my lifelong friend to avenge the murder of his son and to bring an unconscionable rascal to justice."

"Good night," said Deering abruptly, and left Mr. Sanders to find the way down the dark stairs alone.

The stout man had left the bed and put his head close to the open window for a breath of cool air.

"What do you know, Drummond?" asked Deering.

"Not a blame thing. Neither does Jenks."

"Have you run down all the cars on the policeman's list?"

"Every one."

"How about the Hamlin car?"

"We talked with Hamlin—pompous old guy. He hates to be mixed up in the scandal, but came across with all he knew. At seven-forty last night, he left his car in front of the post office and took his kids to the movies to kill time till the mail train came in. The car was empty, so far as he knows. There was no one in it, anyway, when he came back from the movies about eight-thirty. His kids climbed in and sat there while he went for the mail. Around a quarter to nine, he got in himself, and just then he heard somebody yell at Jessup, whose car was next in line behind him. Jessup was trying to swing out of the line, and his front wheels just missed striking the dead body. That's all Hamlin knows."

"Any marks on the car?"

"No, dang it! She'd just been washed."

"What time did you see it?"

"About five o'clock."

"When was it washed?"

"Around noon."

"Why was it washed?"

"I knew you'd ask that, chief. It seems the Hamlin chauffeur has been laid up with a sore hand, and the car hadn't had a bath in a couple of weeks, so Hamlin himself ran it down to the local garage this morning and hired the washing done. I says to him, 'Why did you have the car washed to-day in particular?' and his wife busts in and says, 'He had it washed to-day because I told him I wouldn't live with him another day unless he had it washed. That's why.' So I guess it just happened, chief. Them people are honest enough. But I didn't take no chances, at that. I horned in at the garage here in town and had a talk with the rube that washed the car. He was just a kid and told me all he knew, which was nothing."

"That eliminates the Hamlin car for a while. It won't be necessary, anyway."

"Why? Have you got something?"

"I think so," said Dan Deering. "Let's finish about the cars first. What about Jessup's lights?"

"Dolan, the cop, says they were lighted when he found the body. The Hamlin kids say Jessup turned on the glim just before he started up to get away, and Jessup says so, too. He had just switched on his lamps when a neighbor of his named Perkins yelled at him that there was a man under his wheels. Perkins hadn't seen anything up to then; he had left his car, the way they all seem to have done. In fact, I haven't been able to find anybody who was in a car at the post office when the shot was fired except a couple of old ladies named Wickmire, and they didn't see anything out of the way. 'Most

everybody else was walking the sidewalk or eating ice cream around. Speaking of ice cream, chief, you know what people are saying about this Harry Loveland and his lady friends, don't you?"

"Yes, I've heard nothing else all afternoon."

"They say there's two sisters here, Kenton by name, and both of them loony over him."

"I know," said Deering. "But here's something better."

He handed Drummond Paula Loveland's last letter to her husband. The stout man read and returned it in silence.

"Drummond, do you remember an accident that happened to Jenks last winter?"

"Having his teeth knocked down his throat, you mean? Sure I remember. So does Jenks."

"Well, you go out and hunt up Jenks and tell him that the handy young person who spoiled his looks for him last winter is here in this hotel, in room twelve. Tell him to keep the fellow in sight till further orders."

"All right, chief," said Drummond, and, putting on his coat, he departed for the railway station, where he had left Jenks an hour before in the pleasant task of making friends with the young nighthawks of Wells Lake.

## CHAPTER XX.

The railway station at Wells Lake was a favorite resort for the youth of the village after dark. On the station platform, when the evening train had backed down into the yards for its night's rest, the male quartet assembled to fill the air with harmony, surrounded by a more or less approving audience of youths whom the thoughtless among the summer people called "town loafers."

As a matter of fact, the young men who loafed around the station at night

did considerably less loafing in twenty-four hours than the summer people. Most of the boys worked all day in the pencil factory, a dingy little building that supplied half the world with pencils to write down its thoughts and to add up its figures.

The station was the Wells Lake forum, where political problems were settled, the war fought to a conclusion, and the gossip of the community thrashed out. Prudish persons, overhearing some of the talk that went on, might have considered the station forum a hotbed of vice and iniquity. But the fact remained that the station gathering was as important in the life and the thought of the town as the Emerson Debating Society, which met once a month at the home of some member; and the station opinions were often as nearly right as those of the Emersonians.

Most of the young loafers were manly. Six of their number had enlisted in the State militia for service in Europe, and the national army draft made no diminution in the size of the crowd, for every man whose name was drawn had already volunteered. Indeed, the only incident resembling a draft riot that occurred in Wells Lake that summer was when one of the Reasoner twins was summoned to the colors. The Reverend Augustus had been strong for the Allies, but he resented the action of the government in making a soldier of his son Orlo and leaving so many common, ordinary boys at home to chew tobacco and tell stories around the railway station at night.

"Why is it," Doctor Appleby asked Miss Farnum, "that the social class that has received the greatest number of blessings from democracy is so often the last class willing to stand up and fight for democracy?"

"But that is not true," replied Miss Farnum. "The well to do, as a class, are carrying more than their share of

the burden of this war. I've just been reading an article about that very thing."

"I hope you are right," said the dominie. "But as a general proposition, it does seem to me that the people whose cellars are well filled with the fruits of freedom are the people who object hardest to extending the benefits of freedom to other people. Look at Luther Loveland, for example. America has made him rich. The freedom our forefathers fought to win has enabled him to pile up seven fortunes in a lifetime. Yet in politics he is a worse old aristocrat and a more intolerant old Bourbon than any king in French history. Why is it?"

Perhaps the young men at the railway station asked similar questions in their more bitter discussions. But on this Saturday night, the subject of their talk was the Loveland murder. Kid Dolan was there, his automobile having been locked up in Meredith Jones' livery stable for the night. So was Lem Vroom, the village hackman, drunker than usual and boasting of the lightning quality of his intellect.

"Give me three fingers of corn juice," said Lem, from his baggage-truck throne, "and I can think rings around the—hic—Pres'dent of these United States. 'S perfec'ly wonnerful how fasht my wheels go round when I'm feeling good!"

Somebody pushed Lem's hat down over his eyes, and from beneath the felt Lem continued to advertise his mental alertness.

"Alc'hol's man's bes' friend," he concluded. "Look at me. Who'm I? Poor old Lem Vroom, the village hackman. But I'll show him! You jus' wait! I'll show him whosh greates' detective on earth!"

Here Lem lapsed into a fit of tearful brooding and was heard from no more, except when he muttered, now and then:

"I'll show him! Shove me out in the dark hall, will he? Throw me downstairs, will he? I'll show him whosh got brainsh!"

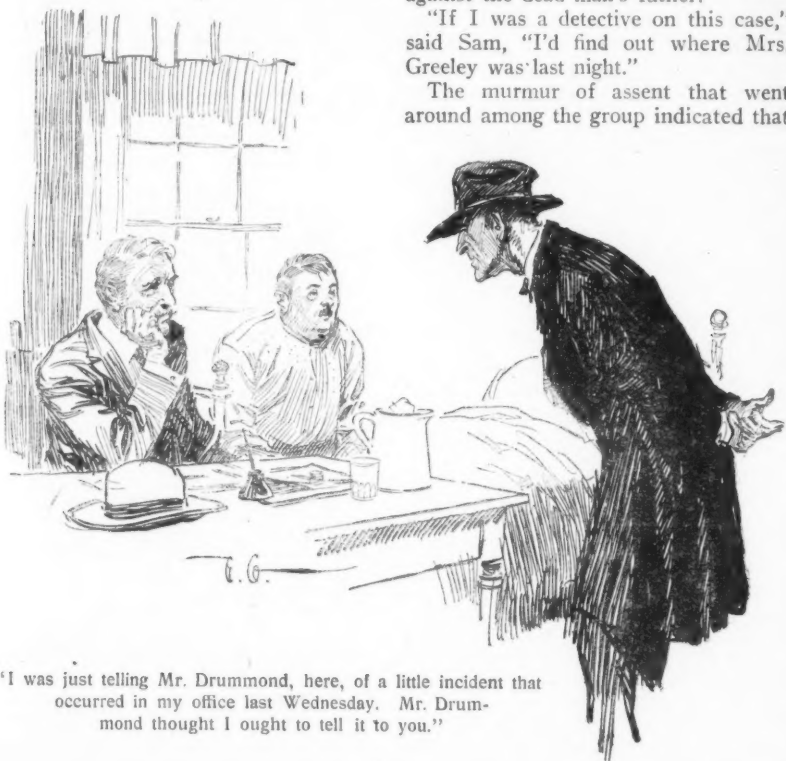
Concerning the murder, the night-hawks agreed that Harry Loveland had

ple been hunting his scalp. That's why he lived up here so much of the time, playing at farming."

Sam Gessler, whose father ran the shoe store, surmised that the shooting might have been a piece of revenge against the dead man's father.

"If I was a detective on this case," said Sam, "I'd find out where Mrs. Greeley was last night."

The murmur of assent that went around among the group indicated that



"I was just telling Mr. Drummond, here, of a little incident that occurred in my office last Wednesday. Mr. Drummond thought I ought to tell it to you."

received what had been coming to him. As to the identity of the slayer, they advanced many theories. Charlie Buford, the express messenger, had a notion that some former associate of Harry's in business in Chicago had done the deed.

"They tell me he hadn't the nerve to be seen in the street down there in the city after his copper company went to smash. They say there's a raft of peo-

a similar idea had occurred to other men than Sam; and Butcher Sikes' son Lincoln added:

"They say Lute ain't been over to East Cove this summer."

A stranger had joined the group earlier in the evening. His lip was adorned with a silky mustache. His name was Jenks, he told Kid Dolan, and he traveled for a picture-post-card house. The nighthawks, always glad

to hear new stories from the outside world, welcomed him with easy good nature, and spoke freely before him on the all-absorbing subject of the murder. But now, at a leading question from him, the crowd froze up.

"Who is this Mrs. Greeley?" he asked.

No one answered. There is a limit beyond which men gossips will not go, and the nighthawks behaved as if they had not heard the question. Perhaps it was pity for the sorrowing Luther Loveland that kept them silent. Perhaps it was the affection that most of the Wells Lake people had for him, sinful though he was. Perhaps it was the instinctive sympathy that all men feel for a sinner, knowing that in their hearts they are sinners, too. Or it may have been the native reluctance against airing the standing scandal of the town before an outsider.

The stranger Jenks turned to the young man nearest him, who happened to be Kid Dolan.

"Who is this Mrs. Greeley?" he asked again, in a tone inviting confidence.

"Ask Lute Loveland," replied Kid Dolan; and the embarrassed gap in the talk continued until Lem Vroom began again.

"Greatest detective on earth!" Lem shouted. "I'll show him! I'll show him whosh got lightning brains!"

"Aw, Lem, shut up!" called some one, in friendly contempt.

"I'll show him, I tell you! Throw me downstairs in the dark when I was giving him a tip, will he? I'll show the sucker!"

From up the street near the post office came a peculiar whistle, heard by no one at the station except Jenks. In the moonlit street in front of the bank Jenks saw the portly form of Drummond, his partner in the operations of the Deering agency. Quietly he slipped

away from the station crowd and joined his colleague on the bank doorstep.

"Hawkshaw!" said some one in the crowd when Jenks had gone. The others laughed.

"Well, I got to get home and sleep," yawned Charlie Buford, stretching his tired young arms toward the stars. "You guys that don't have to work hard can stay up all night if you want to, but me for the hay."

"Cheer up, Charlie," said Kid Dolan. "Summer'll be over in a couple of months, and then the company'll lay you off."

"Not much they won't!" retorted Charlie. "They'll keep me all winter because they know they'll never find another man willing to handle all the freight that comes into this burg by express. Not in a thousand years! So long, fellows."

"Guesh I'll go home, too," said Lem Vroom. "Got to feed the old mare her supper."

"Come on, Lem," said young Dolan. "I'll see you up the street."

"It's a long way to Tipperary," answered the town drunkard. "You're a nice boy, Kid. I always liked you."

Slowly the pair meandered through the quiet town toward the lane where Lem Vroom kept his family, his spavined mare, and his rickety hack. As they walked along, Lem's thoughts reverted to his grievance against Daniel Deering.

"Pushed me out—throwed me downstairs!" he mumbled. "I'll show him!"

"Lem," said the Kid, "if I didn't know you so well, I'd think you were sore at somebody."

"Sore? I am!" cried Lem. "I'm sore at that city detective Loveland's got up here! I went to his room to tell him who shot Harry Loveland, and he throwed me downstairs!" He shook himself free from the Kid's helping arm and waved his fist at the moon. "I'll show him! He don't know what a

roaring lion he stirred up when he insulted poor old Lem Vroom!"

"Don't roar here, Lem. People want to sleep."

Obediently Lem calmed down and remained peaceable until they reached Doctor Galloway's gate, when he boiled again.

"Listen, Kid! You're friend of mine. You're a nice boy. Do you want to know something?"

"Knowledge is power," young Dolan replied.

"Then let's sit down. My legs are kind of played out."

They sat down on Doctor Galloway's horse block.

"My legs are played out," said Lem, "but my mind's working fine. Now listen."

It was a long and rambling tale that Lem Vroom told Kid Dolan, and it was punctuated with many references to the high speed of Lem's mentality. Doctor Galloway, trying to go to sleep, heard their voices out in front for an hour.

When the story was ended, the Kid's face was sober.

"If I were you, Lem, I'd shut up tight about this. The more you tell, the more trouble you may have on your hands. You ought to be home in bed."

Piloting the unsteady hackman up the remainder of the hill and down the lane to the humble door of the Vroom household, the Kid bade him good night and headed swiftly down the hill toward the lake. Before a woodbine-covered cottage he stopped. The cottage was dark.

"Poor old Tom!" thought the Kid. "I'll let him sleep. He's had enough for one day. Lem's story will keep."

## CHAPTER XXI.

Mrs. Tom Dolan turned a pair of tear-red eyes toward her kitchen door next morning as a step sounded outside.

"Oh, it's you, Kid."

"Yep," answered young Dolan. "Where's Tom?"

"Tom's gone for a walk in the country."

"You folks are going to have spring chicken for dinner, ain't you? Wish I could drop around for one of them hind legs, but I've got to drive a party over to Little Falls."

"Yes," Mrs. Dolan sighed, "poor Tom's going to have one more square meal, if we have to starve the rest of our lives. He's feeling pretty blue this morning, after getting the sack last night. I'd just like to tell those commissioners a thing or two, I would!"

"Don't you worry about starving, Mame. Tom has more friends in this town than Old Man Loveland himself. If I had as many friends as Tom, I'd get myself elected to Congress and lose 'em all. I'll bet you a dollar, Mame, that the commissioners will ask Tom to take his job back inside of a week."

"No hope of that, Kid. But I wish he could hear you say those nice things about him, because he's dreadful upset."

"Tell him to cheer up," said the loyal brother. "Tell him I'll have some news for him when I get back from Little Falls to-night."

When the discharged policeman returned home at dinner time from his visit to the Hamlin camp, his mind was still hard at work on its problem. His good wife bustled about her task of putting the dinner on the table, trying to be cheerful for his sake and help him forget his downfall. But the fact of his discharge weighed less heavily upon him than the fact of the murder. It was not of himself that he thought, but of his failure in his duty. Tom had the artist's soul, if he had known it.

His sense of responsibility for the law and order of Wells Lake had become a fixed idea with him, and he had not put it aside when he had taken off his badge of office. He did not know what progress Daniel Deering and his men had made. He hoped, in his simple, honest fashion, that they had dis-



covered better clews than the single one that he carried in his pocketbook. But his pride still smarted a little from the curt indifference of the city detective. If Deering did not care for his aid, Tom would see what he could do alone. Perhaps the Chicago people would be glad to have his help later on.

"Do you know what the Kid says, Tom?"

"What, Mame?"

"He says the commissioners will give you back your job inside of a week."

"Maybe so," said Tom, thinking of the lace handkerchief.

Fortified with two platefuls of fried spring chicken that the devoted Mame had prepared for him, Tom sauntered down to Dal Henderson's little boat-yard on the lake shore. Dal was lying on the ground underneath a motor boat that his windlass had hauled out upon the ways, and he was putting in the Sunday afternoon pleasantly in painting the boat's hull.

Nature had meant Dal Henderson to be a painter of pictures; he loved colors, he liked to handle a brush. Fate and circumstance had made him a marine carpenter, a doctor of gas engines, and a keeper of rowboats for hire, but he satisfied his ruling passion by painting boat bottoms in all the colors of the rainbow. Indeed, a rainbow flaunting some of the hues that Dal used would be a queer sight in any sky.

"What's this craft going to be?" asked Tom. "A U-boat chaser?"

"Hello, Tom!" Dal replied, crawling out from under the glistening hull and grinning to his visitor. "Ain't she a beauty?"

"Red, white, and blue," said Tom, admiring the vivid stripes that ran from stem to rudder-post below the water line. "What's your idea, Dal—to scare all the German carp out of the lake?"

"Art for art's sake—duty and pleasure combined," the painter explained. "After I give her a streak of green

along the sides and do her decks in mahogany, she'll be a thing of beauty and a joy forever. A man may as well make a good time out of his work. That's my motto."

"It's a good one, too," Tom Dolan agreed. "If a man doesn't enjoy his work and take a pride in it, he might as well not do it."

"Enthusiasm—that's what counts," Dal philosophized. "I can paint a boat twicet as quick when I'm embellishing her, like, and making her pretty. Old Jessup may object to all this patriotism under here, but maybe I can get her into the water before he sees it."

"Dal," said Tom, "have you got a rowboat you could spare me this afternoon?"

"Sure thing. Take that blue skiff, there, at the end of the wharf—the one with the pink ribs. You'll find the oars under the shed."

Along the shore Tom Dolan rowed, and rounded the point where the Jessups lived. Mr. Jessup himself was reclining under a pine tree at the land end of his dock, and it may be presumed that he was lying in wait to warn fishermen away from the vicinity. It was Mr. Jessup's belief that his property rights extended beyond his shore line halfway to the middle of the lake, and he permitted no one to fish near Jessup Point except those whom he could not bulldoze into going away. Waving his fist at fishermen and raising the American flag to the top of his flagpole constituted Mr. Jessup's daily exercise. He eyed Tom's blue rowboat with suspicion until it had passed his premises.

Across the open lake Tom headed toward the green shores of Elk Island. After a half hour's pull under the July sun, he drew near the landing place. The big house of the Kentons seemed to have been deserted; no one appeared on the veranda, the lawn, or the bathing beach. Tied up at the float in front of the house lay the handsome hydroplane

that Harry Loveland would never again send flying across the lake at thirty miles an hour.

Having reached his destination, Tom Dolan hesitated, wondering what to do next. To give his mind time to form a plan, he rowed past the house, the docks, the ice house, the boat shelters, and farther along the shore until he came to the upper end of the island. Here stood a grove of tall spruces, the ground beneath them clear of undergrowth; and upon the ground, in the shade near the water's edge, sat Maisie Kenton and the little Benvil boy.

"Hello, man!" shouted the three-year-old. "What 'oo doin' out dere?"

"Hello, baby!" Tom responded, running his boat's nose up on the sandy beach and resting on his oars.

"I ain't a baby," protested the youngster.

"He stopped being a baby on his third birthday," Maisie Kenton explained. "I hope you aren't fishing on Sunday, Tom Dolan."

"No," said Tom. "I'm rowing for pleasure, and it's poor fun under a sky like this. I'll come ashore and borrow a little of your shade, if you don't object."

"Come ahead," said Maisie. "We're lonesome, aren't we, Jack?"

While the small boy climbed in and out of the boat as it rested on the sand, Tom Dolan and Maisie sat looking out across the blue water, neither caring to speak. At last Maisie said:

"Do you—does anybody know anything more about Friday night?"

"That's what I've come out here to talk to you about," Dolan answered uncomfortably.

"I didn't suppose you rowed all the way out here on this hot day just for a boat ride."

At her tone, half jesting, half defiant, Tom took heart.

"Miss Maisie," he said, "I'm not the town policeman any more. They fired

me last night. You all out here are my friends, and I hope I'm yours. I've known you all since you were little kids not much bigger'n the boy yonder. But, you see, Miss Maisie, I was the town policeman when Harry Loveland was killed, I was on duty that night, and I've just got to ask you a question. I couldn't hold up my head in the town again if I didn't ask you. You can answer it or not, just as you like."

"This seems to be examination day on Elk Island," laughed Maisie. "We answered questions all morning, so I suppose I can answer another."

"Who has been here asking you questions?"

"Mr. Deering—the celebrated Mr. Deering of Chicago—and one of his men, a very stout man who perspired."

"Did they find out anything?"

"Oh, yes. We told them everything we knew, of course."

"About Harry and Bert—Mrs. Benvil, I mean?"

Maisie gave him a quick look, but Tom was as innocent of craftiness or hidden motive as the little boy on the beach. It was as if he had been a big brother of hers.

"That was it mainly, Tom," she replied. "But ask me your question and let's get it over. What do you want to know?"

"I want to know this, Miss Maisie: At the inquest yesterday, did you tell everything you might have told?"

"What I said at the inquest, Tom, was the absolute truth."

"But was it the whole truth? You said that you didn't see Harry any more after you left him at the post office. You remember saying that, don't you?"

"Well?"

"The murder was committed at the post office, in a manner of speaking. When you left Harry at the post office, as you told the jury, did you leave him alive?"

Maisie dug a little hole in the ground beside her, under the spruce needles.

"Don't answer unless you want to," said Tom. "But you know who killed Harry Loveland, don't you?"

"What makes you think I know?"

"You'll believe I'm trying to get you into trouble, Miss Maisie, but I'm not. I'm only doing my duty, and the Lord knows I hate it. But suppose this Deering man had told you he had found one of your handkerchiefs in the Hamlin car that stood just in front of the place where we found Harry's body, and suppose he told you there was blood on the running board of the car. What then?"

"He didn't tell me those things," said Maisie.

"But he might have told you."

"Did he find the handkerchief, Tom?"

"No, but I did, and I found the blood spots. Weren't you in the Hamlin car when the shot was fired? I'm not trying to fix the blame on you, Miss Maisie. I can't prove anything by what I know. But if Deering knew what I know, he might prove almost anything by it. That's one reason why I've come to you."

Maisie's eyes brimmed with tears.

"I can't tell you anything, Tom. If I were the only one to consider, I'd tell you everything. I'd trust you because I know you have always been a good friend to us. Oh, Tom, Tom, you've no idea how dreadful it is!"

The tears poured down her cheeks. She groped about for her handkerchief, but it was in the pocket of little Jack Benvil's romper suit, and Jack Benvil was in the boat.

Tom reached for his coat, which lay on the ground at his feet. Slowly he drew forth his pocketbook, took therefrom a little square of lace and linen embroidered with the letters "M. K." and handed it to her.

"Here, Miss Maisie," said simple-hearted Tom Dolan.

## CHAPTER XXII.

As long as the point of the island remained in sight, Tom could see the girl and the little boy watching him from the water's edge.

At home he sat on his doorstep and meditated, recalling Maisie Kenton's last words to him.

"Tom, good friend," she had said to him, "there are worse sorrows in the world than the sorrow that comes from death. If I tell you what I know, it will do more harm than good; it will break a heart that least deserves to be broken. I'll promise you this, Tom, that if the need ever comes, I'll tell you all there is to tell. If it comes to the point where some one is wrongfully accused, I'll tell what I know. Won't you leave it that way, Tom? Won't you be satisfied to take my word?"

"All right," his reply had been, "I'm not a policeman now, anyhow. I'll not bother you with any more questions. I don't know anything except what I've told you. I believe you're a fine little woman, Miss Maisie, and I don't believe you had any more to do with the shooting of Loveland than I had, no matter how much you may happen to know about it."

On his doorstep he thought, and all his thinking came to this, that some great trouble hung over Maisie Kenton, from which he would like to shield her, and that he was a fool and had never been cut out for a detective, anyway.

He had just arrived at the last wholesome conclusion when his brother's car rolled up to the lawn's edge, and the Kid hopped out.

"Come round out of sight where we can talk," said the younger Dolan, and led the way to the back yard, where Tom had built a bench under one of his apple trees.

"I tried to see you last night, but you'd gone to bed, and this morning you were away." The Kid was excited.

"Say, Tom, you can run down the Loveland murderer and beat the Deerings off the map if you want to."

"Maybe I don't want to," Tom replied.

"Shucks! And let them win all the rewards and the glory? When did you begin to be a quitter, Tom? I know you're feeling rotten, but let me tell you—who do you think was in town the night of the murder?"

"Who?"

"John J. Benvil."

"Bert Kenton's husband? Who told you?"

"Lem Vroom. Lem saw him light down from the mail train that night, ten or fifteen minutes before the shooting; and before the murder was discovered, Benvil was beating it for Lambert Junction as fast as Lem's old nag could travel. Lem says Benvil was all wrought up; he kept looking at his watch, though they had hours to make the midnight train. Lem left him at the station there, and Benvil gave him a ten-dollar bill to help him forget. Well, Lem was soused last night and tried to tell Deering, and Deering wouldn't listen to him—threw him downstairs, Lem says. I'm the only one Lem has told, so far as I know, and he's promised to keep his mouth shut. Now, Tom, there's your opening. Go to it!"

"What do you want me to do, Kid—go to Chicago and arrest Benvil on the say-so of a common drunk like Lem Vroom? I'd be a town joke, sure."

"No, but looky here, Tom. Here's the facts in the case. Benvil ought to have shot Loveland long ago; everybody says so. Well, Benvil comes to town, ten minutes later Loveland is killed, and right away afterward Benvil skips out. Jumping Jerooshy, Tom, they hang many a man on less evidence than that!"

"You don't want to see Benvil swing, do you?"

"No, but what has that got to do with it?" The Kid had an artist's soul himself. "Here's the biggest murder case that ever happened in this county, and you go and lie down on it!" It was almost more than a younger brother's affection could stand. "Listen, Tom! You haven't been out of this town in ten years and you need a vacation. Why don't you slip down to Chicago to-night and take a look around? You might happen into Benvil's office and jump him about Friday night, just to see what he says. It won't do any harm, and maybe you'll land something big and put one over on this bunch of imported sleuths yet. It'll set you right with the town again, Tom. You owe it to yourself and Mame and the kids. You owe it to me, darn it!"

"It won't do any harm, I suppose," Tom answered, convinced against his will. "Anyway, maybe I can pick up a job down there in the city. I've got to leave here. I made up my mind this afternoon."

Tom went indoors and, to the joy of his brother and the sorrow of Mrs. Dolan, looked for the satchel that he had carried on his wedding trip ten years before and had never used since.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

When Miss Matilda Farnum's Sunday-school class broke up that hot July afternoon, no one could have told whether it was the spinster teacher or her pupils that experienced the greater feeling of relief.

Doctor Appleby's church was cool enough through nine months of the year—too cool, in fact, despite the warm and impassioned sermons that came from the pulpit. But on this July Sabbath, the little sanctuary was an oven, and the eleven-year-old boys whom Miss Farnum undertook to teach—no other grown-up in the church possessing the courage—were restless beyond quieting.



"Don't answer unless you want to," said Tom. "But you know who killed Harry Loveland, don't you?"

The subject of the lesson was temperance. In vain Miss Farnum tried to hold the attention of her class by telling them stories. The prophet had said that drunkards were as mules and had to be beaten. The boys took the instruction literally and beat one another over the head with their hats and caps. In vain she narrated the sad history of a baseball player who stole away from training quarters one night to drink a glass of beer and lost the championship game next day because the beer had shattered his nerves. The only boy who was at all interested in the tale destroyed its good effect by inquiring what the score was.

Miss Farnum's nerves were as badly shattered as the prodigal baseball player's, when the Sunday-school hour was over and the boys had escaped to the street. Perhaps she felt that the boys were not the only persons concerned

who had reason to shout for joy at the ending of the ordeal.

As she descended the steps of the church, a stout man whom she had never seen before approached her with an awkward effort at tipping his hat.

"Isn't this Miss Farnum?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Will you come with me up to Mr. Loveland's house?"

"Why? Has anything happened to Mrs. Loveland?"

"No, ma'am, but they want you to come and answer some questions."

Miss Farnum turned pale; then began to tremble so violently that the stout man took her arm to steady her.

"Questions?" she repeated.

"Yes, ma'am, and my advice to you is to come along quiet and make no disturbance."

Miss Farnum was still trembling when she entered the Loveland mansion

and passed, at a wave of the stout man's hand, into the library. Luther Loveland sat in his wicker chair. His eyes were far away from her face as he bade her good afternoon. A stranger was pacing the floor briskly behind Loveland's chair, and his gaze was bold enough, even if Loveland's was not. The stout man placed a chair for her, and she sat down, clasping her thin hands to hide their tremor.

"Miss Farnum," spoke Loveland, "this gentleman is Mr. Deering of Chicago. He wants to ask you something. I'm sorry to call you up here to the house, but it seemed necessary."

The village stationer had no answer to make, which was perhaps as well, for her throat was very dry.

"Miss Farnum," said the brisk stranger, "why did you send Harry Loveland these Bible texts?"

He had swung toward her suddenly and thrust three correspondence cards before her face. At sight of them, she started, gasped, and struggled to speak, but the only response she could make to his abrupt interrogation was to cover her face with her hands and weep.

"We're waiting," said Deering. "We want to know why you sent Harry those cards."

The tone of his voice, hard and bullying, gave her courage.

"How do you know I sent them?" she demanded, looking up at him defiantly.

"It's none of your business how we know," Deering answered, with a laugh that was almost a bark. "But just to convince you that we know you did send them, I'll tell you how we know. You keep cards like these in stock; there on the table you will see a box of them that one of my men bought in your stationery store yesterday. These cards and those are out of the same identical lot—the same material, the same texture, the same gilt edges, the same size, everything. We know that

these cards in my hand came out of your shop."

"I wouldn't try to deny it," replied Miss Farnum, drying her eyes and facing him bravely. "But the fact that these cards came out of my stock doesn't prove that I wrote them, does it?"

Turning to the table, he took up a book and opened it to the back flyleaf.

"You run a circulating library in a corner of your store, don't you?"

"I do."

"This book is one of yours, isn't it?"

It was a religious novel, and its broken binding and well-worn edges told that many a Wells Lake reader had used it.

"That is one of my books, certainly," Miss Farnum admitted. "But what does that prove?"

He held the flyleaf before her eyes.

"You take care of the books yourself, don't you? You issue them, you enter the names of the borrowers in the back, with the dates of lending and returning?"

"Yes, sir."

"The writing in the back of this book is yours?"

"It is."

"Then look at the writing on these cards. Wasn't it done by the same hand and with the same pen and ink that made those entries in the back of the book?"

The defiant look faded from her face, and she bowed her head humbly.

"Do you need any further proof that we know you wrote these cards, Miss Farnum?"

"No," she answered.

"Why did you write them? What business had you to send anonymous and threatening communications to the man who has just been murdered? What did you know that led you to believe he was about to be killed?"

Her lips moved in a whispered "God help me!" Then she rose and, sum-



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moning all her strength, faced the detective with flashing eyes.

"Why did I write these cards? I knew Harry Loveland all his life, from his babyhood up. I loved him as a little boy and I loved him in his young manhood, and he was making a failure of his life. I sent those cards because I was his friend—because I could see what he was coming to and he could not. I sent them to save him. I thought it might help him reclaim himself if he knew how he looked in the eyes of others. When I sent them, I had no idea how near his punishment was, but I knew it was coming, and I told him so in the only way I dared."

Then her strength left her and she sank down shuddering in the chair again. Deering shook his head cynically.

"It won't do, Miss Farnum," said he. "Do you mean to tell us that your sending these cards was only a bit of religious exercise, a piece of missionary work and nothing else? You're a mighty accurate prophet, it seems to me, to have guessed as closely as you did. You told him that his calamity should come suddenly; suddenly he should be broken without remedy. Soon afterward he was murdered. Do you expect us to believe that you had no foreknowledge of the crime?"

"I had no foreknowledge of the crime itself," she answered. "I knew simply and in a general way that something of the sort—some terrible and unforeseen blow from Heaven—was certain to fall upon him. The wicked are surely punished, sir. I haven't studied my Bible all these years without knowing that."

"So you considered it your Christian duty to warn your erring neighbor from his ways before it was too late?"

"Why not, sir?"

Deering shrugged his shoulders incredulously. To Loveland he said:

"I think it will be wise to hold this woman in custody until she is ready to

tell us the truth. I don't suppose she did the killing, but we can't afford to be sentimental in these matters; we must be sensible and practical. After the murder of your son, following these warnings, she couldn't make any court in the land believe that she hadn't some inside knowledge of what was going to happen. A night or two in the jail over at the county seat may help her memory."

But Loveland paid no attention to the detective's words. His eyes looked past Deering to the library door, where stood Mrs. Loveland. Tall, slender, frail she was, and her white hair formed a kind of halo around her once beautiful face.

Quietly Mrs. Loveland stepped to Miss Farnum's side and slipped an arm around her shoulders.

"Luther," she said to her husband, "you shall not annoy Matilda any further in this affair. Matilda is my friend. I forbid you to question her or to doubt that what she has told you is the truth. I will not have it."

Loveland stared at his wife, but not for long. Before her calm and steadfast look his eyes dropped, and he turned to the detective helplessly.

"Mrs. Loveland," spoke Deering, "it's a pity that we have to do this, but we mustn't be soft and foolish. This woman may be a friend of yours, and all that. But it happens that your son has been murdered, and that she sent him three distinct warnings. She must have known something. She may not be implicated, but she knew, and it does her no good to say that she got her knowledge out of the Bible. The presumption is that she had particular information that the crime was to be committed. We are justified in holding her as an accessory before the fact. Law is law, Mrs. Loveland, and it doesn't listen to moonshine. I am sorry, but until Miss Farnum is ready to tell us what she knows, we shall have to lock her up."

"Then," replied Mrs. Loveland, "you will have to lock me up with her, for if Matilda is an accessory in Harry's murder, so am I."

"Lucy dear, please don't!" cried Miss Farnum, but Mrs. Loveland brushed aside her protesting hand and went on:

"What Matilda has told you is the truth, but not the whole truth. She did write those cards and send them to Harry. She has not told you that she wrote them at my request. I asked her to write them."

"You!" exclaimed Loveland and Deering.

"Yes, I—and if you arrest her, you must arrest me."

"But, Lucy," cried Loveland, "why —"

"You should know why," the white-haired woman replied. "Because he was my son—and yours. Do you dare ask me to say more?"

Loveland's face quivered with the muscular spasms that had robbed him of his look of strength in the two days since Harry's death. The craven shadow was there in his eyes, as Deering had seen it the day before. Abjectly Loveland turned to the detective.

"Let me have those cards," he said, and before Deering could stop him, Luther Loveland had torn them into bits.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

As a detective, Daniel Deering formed many of his important conclusions before he found evidence to support them. Frequently his bold methods, based rather upon uncanny instinct than upon reason, led to brilliant successes; as in the case of Grimes, the labor agitator, whom he arrested in Minneapolis for a bomb outrage committed twelve hours before in Seattle; or in the Newhall affair, wherein a bank president who had summoned him to investigate the looting of a money vault found himself behind a cell door within

twenty minutes of the detective's arrival on the scene.

But there had been times lately when Deering's clairvoyant presumptions of guilt had resulted in costly errors; times when the courts had frowned upon his wolflike ferocity in pursuit of his prey. Among his men it was common talk that these recent reverses had impaired his control; which being true, it was plainly Mr. Deering's duty to himself and his business to unload some of his self-esteem and thus reduce the burden that his nerve had to carry. But Deering, who knew what his men said of him as well as if they had spoken in his presence, clung doggedly to his faith in his infallibility.

On the Sunday night of our story, his thirty-hour study of the Loveland murder had left him a bewildered and impatient man. His supper, which Hiram Gifford had carried up to his room in the Grand Palace Hotel, remained untasted on its tray while he thrashed over as much of the case as he understood. His trouble in his present problem was, as he admitted reluctantly to himself, that he knew too much about it. He felt like the man who was unable to see the forest for the trees, and again like the donkey that had its choice of the hay in two stacks and starved to death trying to make up its mind which stack to attack first.

A man, the most conspicuous young man in the community, had been shot down in a public street within sight of many persons, and no witness to the killing could be found. The scarcity of witnesses was not discouraging to a detective whose method was to begin at the circumference of the event in hand and work back toward the center. But when Deering sought for the circumference of the Loveland murder, he found not one, but four, and in this confusion of possible causes his intellect wandered helplessly.

There were many enemies who might

have sought young Loveland's life. Drummond had brought in word from every side concerning Harry's notorious attachment to Elk Island and his familiarity with Bertha Benvil, flaunted in the face of the townspeople for two summers. A long-distance telephone call to Chicago had refreshed Deering's recollection of Miss Beebe's bit of nursemaid espionage. John Joseph Benvil's jealousy of his wife was a motive more than sufficient to explain the shooting.

But Drummond had unearthed a second story that supplied a motive in conflict with the first. According to Miss Haggard, the village dressmaker and one of Drummond's informants, Maisie Kenton "done her best to land Harry Loveland, but her married sister cut her out. It was a scandal, the way them two girls ran after him." Motive number two seemed to Deering as well worth considering as motive number one. But a third motive entered to demoralize his reconstruction of the crime.

For a year or more, the Deering Agency had been employed by the man now lying dead in the fine home on the hill to seek evidence against his wife, who had been Paula Parwin, the actress—evidence to convince a mistrusting judge that Harry deserved his freedom from her. The court had rejected Harry's accusation that Paula had deserted him; moreover, the court had been severe in denouncing the effort of the rich young man to cast off a wife who had given her health in giving him a son. The best that Harry's lawyers had been able to do was to gain a delay in which to try to show that the wife was morally unworthy.

But the wealth of the Lovelands and the stealth of the Deerings had failed to uncover the first fragment of sin to record against the gay little girl of the pony ballet. More than that, the insinuating Detective Jenks, whom Deering had assigned to the task of inquir-

ing into Paula's history, had encountered a savage young brother of Paula's, who had sent him home to Chicago with an eye closed and two front teeth missing. Dire threats this brother had made at the time, and now, in Deering's possession, was a letter from Paula virtually warning her husband of the brother's visit to Wisconsin and hinting even at personal violence.

The brother had come to Wells Lake and had called upon Harry Loveland, as Harry's mother told Deering when he described Parwin's appearance to her. Hiram Gifford and Lawyer Sanders could testify that the brother had displayed unmistakable signs of a bellicose state of mind, and Sanders had seen Parwin watching the Loveland house on the evening of the murder. This was motive number three, and it would have satisfied any detective. But still another motive intruded upon Deering's calculations.

Jenks had reported the remark that he had overheard from one of the night-hawks at the railway station regarding Harry's business career in Chicago, and Deering knew some of the details of that career himself. Harry had organized a copper company, and hundreds of investors, attracted by the Loveland name, had exchanged their savings for stock. Then Harry's "mountain of copper," as his advertisements described it, had turned out to be only a mountain of Colorado granite with a copperas glaze as thick as a windowpane upon one face of it, and a good deal of money had been lost, including some of Luther Loveland's. It was conceivable that one of Harry's shareholders in that ill-starred enterprise might have had a hand in the murder.

To add to Deering's difficulties, the clew of the correspondence cards had led him nowhere except to the Loveland door itself, and the unaccountable perversity of Luther Loveland had blocked further investigation in that di-

rection. Was Loveland working at cross purposes with him?

Puzzling over the jumble of clashing interests, Deering gnawed a black cigar until little was left of it except the end where the light should have been. Fretfully he walked the floor, but the spider's web was badly tangled now, and its only victim thus far seemed to be the spider himself.

The door opened, and Detective Jenks came softly in. His smile disclosed a pair of porcelain teeth under his silky mustache.

"My friend is packing his grip," he reported, in a husky whisper. "I left Drummond to keep an eye on him a minute, so I could give you some more dope about this Mrs. Greeley. I've had a talk with the jay that runs this house —"

"Dash the jay that runs this house!" Deering exploded. "Dash Mrs. Greeley, and dash you! How in blazes do you expect to get action in this 'case if you listen to the tattle of all the old women in Wisconsin?"

"Well, then," said Jenks, who was a truckler from Truckletown and whose motto was "Safety First," "maybe you'd like to know some more news about this fellow Benvil that young Loveland was on such good terms with his wife."

"Your English is rotten, Jenks, but go ahead."

"Benvil was in town the night of the murder."

"Get out! Where'd you hear that?"

"From a druggist across the way, Garner by name. He says Benvil came into his store just before the shooting. Benvil's wife was there, too, and the rest of young Loveland's bunch of fairies, but they didn't speak—Benvil and his wife, I mean—and Benvil went out in the street again. This was after Harry left them to go look for the missing Kenton girl."

"The Kentons forgot to mention this at the island this morning," said Deer-

ing to himself. Eagerly his mind seized upon the information, only to find that it carried its sting. For if Benvil's presence in town on the evening of the crime was important, then Bushnell Parwin's meant nothing, and all the elaborate theory that Deering had built up around the little baseball player came tumbling down. So, too, with his conceptions of Maisie Kenton as Loveland's possible slayer. Deering was the most disgusted of men.

Enter now Hiram Gifford, solicitous for his supper dishes.

"Yes, take 'em away," said Deering. "Take 'em away and be dashed!"

The lowly Hiram picked up the tray to bear it downstairs.

"Just a minute," said Deering. "You were telling me about the young fellow in room twelve and how he wrecked a feather mattress for you. Did he give you any explanation?"

"Sure," said Hiram. "Didn't I tell you? It seems he's going to join the army and sail for France to fight under Pershing, and he was only practicing bayonet exercises, like, with that there big club he carries. He would stand the mattress up in a corner and make believe it was the kaiser and jab at it. He showed me how they do. It's all down in a little book he's studying out of. They're told to swing the bayonet up from the ground toward the point of the enemy's chin, and then if the enemy happens to come on too fast, he gets ripped up the middle. I guess that there mattress of mine must have come on too fast, because there wasn't much left of its insides when I opened the door. The reason I opened the door, he was making such a rumpus he couldn't hear me knock."

"Thanks," said Deering. "Now another question: What was it you were telling Mr. Jenks, here, about a Mrs. Greeley?"

Hiram started so suddenly that he let a knife and a fork fall clattering from

the tray to the floor. He glared indignantly at Jenks.

"Me? Me saying anything about Mrs. Greeley? I didn't say anything about any Mrs. Greeley, and if he says I did, I'll take and bust him over the head with all these dishes!"

"How about it, Jenks?" asked Deering.

Jenks looked at the irate hotel man and saw that Hiram Gifford had spoken in earnest.

"Did I say he was the fellow that told me about her?" answered Jenks. "I guess you misunderstood me, chief."

"It's a darned good thing for you," said Hiram, puffing angrily and still inclined to drop the tray upon Mr. Jenks' head. "I'll not have anybody saying that I said anything about that woman or any other woman, not if I know it!"

He withdrew, glowering at Jenks to the last second. When the door had closed, Jenks winked to Deering.

"It's straight goods, anyway, chief. He loosened up and told me all about her. Down at the desk it was, just now, while the boarders were at supper. I swore a bloody oath to him that I wouldn't repeat what he told me, and when you jumped him about it, of course he got sore. It seems they're all afraid of Old Man Loveland in this town. They'd like to tell what all they know on him, but they're scared of their lives to do it. This Mrs. Greeley, now——"

A crash, a scuffle, and a yell from the hall outside broke in upon his tale. Deering flung open the door and rushed out, followed by Jenks, in time to see stout Detective Drummond getting the drubbing of his life.

#### CHAPTER XXV.

Mr. Drummond lay face down across the threshold of room twelve, his legs in the hall, his head in the room. Upon his head sat Bush Parwin and belabored the hall end of Mr. Drummond vigor-

ously with a club. It was the same club that the Hamlin chauffeur had seen Bushnell cut from the sapling thicket—the club that Hiram Gifford and Lawyer Sanders had observed in Bush's possession. In the hands of the hardest-hitting shortstop in America, the club was a terrible weapon.

"Sneak looks at me, will you? Snoop through the keyhole at me, will you?"

Thus cried the agile Bush and accompanied his words with blows upon the most vulnerable portion of Mr. Drummond's anatomy. That the chastisement was not to Mr. Drummond's liking could be told from the smothered roars of pain and rage that came from Mr. Drummond's hidden head.

In the light of Bush Parwin's lamp, Daniel Deering comprehended the situation instantly. Drummond had knelt to take an observation of Parwin through the keyhole; Parwin had swung the door open suddenly and pulled the obese Drummond to the matting before that not very nimble scout could recover his balance and rise to defend himself.

"Help! Help!" Drummond bellowed.

"Jenks, do your duty," Deering commanded, but Jenks had received one licking from Parwin and remembered it vividly.

With a growl and a lunge, Deering threw himself upon the scrappy young baseball player and bore him fighting to the floor. It was two against one now, and the one was only a five-footer. Never did freshman lightweight battle harder for a cane than Bush fought now to retain his club, but the odds were too heavy against him. By the time Hiram Gifford, the traveling salesman, and the other loungers in the hotel office could dash upstairs to discover the cause of the commotion, Bush was at the bottom of the heap, with Drummond's arms around his knees and Deering's elbow around his neck.

"What's this all about?" asked Hi-

ram Gifford, staring at the three-cornered wrestling match on the floor.

"Assault and battery," answered Jenks. "That little guy was trying to brain Drummond with a club." Mr. Jenks' notion of the location of Mr. Drummond's brains was perhaps not complimentary to Mr. Drummond. But no matter.

A man in chauffeur's clothing pushed his way past the hotel keeper and shook a bandaged fist in Deering's face.

"Let go his neck! You're choking him to death!" he shouted. "Why don't you big stiff pick on some one your size?"

"You close up your face and get out of here!" answered Deering. "Gifford, call a cop, will you?"

Hiram Gifford grinned.

"This town ain't got a cop any more since they fired Tom Dolan."

"Very well, then," said Deering, rising from the battlefield and brushing the dust off his trousers, "I'll arrest the man myself."

"What for?" demanded the chauffeur. "What's he done? Don't you guys know who that little fellow is?"

Deering stepped menacingly toward the stranger who took so friendly an interest in the five-foot Goliath.

"Didn't I tell you to get out of here? Another word from you and I'll take you in, too!" He turned to the hotel man. "Gifford, where's the nearest justice of the peace?"

"Judge Tibbles is the nearest, I guess."

"Drummond, let him up."

They lifted the panting Bushnell to his feet and seized his arms—a wise precaution, for the handle of the club stuck out from under the bed.

"Boobs and pikers and peeping Toms!" puffed Bush. "That's what they are, gents! Do you want to know what happened? These lobsters have had their lamps at the keyhole of my door for two days, and just because I

beat one of 'em up for it, they arrest me for assault and battery."

"Don't you care, Bush Parwin," spoke up the chauffeur with the injured hand. "They can't put nothing over on you—not while I'm around!"

It was the Hamlin man of all work. Faithful to the last, he trailed along with the little crowd that followed Deering, Drummond, and the captive up the street to the home of the local magistrate.

Judge Tibbles rose from his porch rocker as the procession came in at the gate. He was a bent, but unbroken old gentleman, a veteran of the Civil War and the owner of the only goatee in Wells Lake.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, "this is an unexpected pleasure."

"I want this young man locked up for assault and battery," spoke Deering. "That's the complainant," and he pointed to the portly Drummond, whose face, even in the darkness under the Tibbles' dooryard trees, could be seen to be swelling up fast on the side that had collided with Hiram Gifford's matting.

"He must be a remarkably warlike young man to assail and batter a victim of that size," said Judge Tibbles.

"Size isn't the question," said Deering. "The assault was committed, and there are two witnesses. Let me talk with you in private a minute."

"Certainly, sir."

The judge and the detective withdrew to the distant end of the porch and held a conference, in which the crowd in the yard saw the magistrate nod many times and heard him exclaim, "You don't say so!" At last the pair returned to the prisoner.

"Your name is Parwin?" asked the judge.

"That's my name. I'd like to plead guilty and settle up now. How much is it worth to manhandle a sneak that looks through keyholes?"



"This is still the Sabbath," replied Judge Tibbles, "and I never hold court on Sunday. I'm afraid I shall have to keep you in charge until to-morrow morning. I will get the key."

Limping into the house, he returned with a padlock key fastened with a bit of wire to a painted stick.

"Mr. Deering, in the absence of a regularly constituted police officer in town, I will leave the locking up to you. My rheumatism is bad this summer, or I would go with you. These other citizens will show you where to find the jail."

Out of the Tibbles yard went the crowd, and down the street a little way, turning into a lane that led toward the pencil factory. The jail was a dark little building at the edge of a marsh behind the factory premises. It was made of logs, and in pioneer days in Wisconsin it had resisted Indian sieges. Into its darkness and dampness, Bush Parwin was thrust. He heard the click of the padlock and the voices of the departing crowd; then the stillness of marsh and woods settled down around the hut, and Bush Parwin shuddered at the loneliness.

They had taken away his matches, fearing that he might set his prison afire, but the moon shone through a barred window and showed him a bunk, a table, a chair with a broken back, and a little iron stove. Evidently there were times when prisoners were permitted to keep warm in spite of the danger from fire.

By the light of the moon, Bush examined a cut across his knuckles and felt gingerly of a shoulder that had been lamed in the fracas at the hotel.

"Mustn't let her get stiff," he muttered, and proceeded in a businesslike manner to remove his coat, collar, and shirt and to begin his setting-up exercises. Arm exercise, leg exercise, trunk exercise—he went through all the difficult and muscle-grinding motions pre-

scribed in his tactics book, as if he had been at American army headquarters in France rather than in a backwoods jail in Wisconsin. To swing and stretch and bend and punch helped to ease the sore spots, and, better still, it took his mind off his troubles.

To Bush, as to every one else in Wells Lake, the Loveland murder had brought a shock of horror. In his case the shock was the greater because he had confidently expected to waylay Harry Loveland on that fateful Friday night and thrash the young gentleman until the young gentleman should succeed in thrashing him—which the young gentleman would certainly do, being twice as big as Bush. There was something quixotic in Bush, some whimsical nobility of character that led him into actions that seemed startling to people who conformed to rule and custom. His quitting baseball in the middle of a prosperous season to join the army was one of those actions. His insistence upon supporting his sister and her little boy on his own earnings was another, and so was his trip to Wisconsin to try to shame his sister's husband into manliness. His determination to fight his towering brother-in-law was perhaps the most ludicrous of all his performances, as viewed by the eyes of comfortable people who never enter a losing fight if they can side-step it. But Bush Parwin was made that way.

Now that Harry was dead, Bush's heart was full of sadness—sadness for Paula, weeping heartbroken in the little flat overlooking the upper bay, grieving for a husband who would never come to ask her forgiveness now; and sadness for Harry himself, for Harry had been a magnificent specimen of physical manhood, whatever his mental and moral equipment may have been. Bush's first thought on seeing him had been, "Lord, what a first baseman he would make!"

Bush had delayed his return to the

East in order to attend Harry's funeral. He felt it was only decent that Harry's wife's family should be represented at that ceremony. He would have gone to see Harry's mother and offer her his condolences, but he feared that he would be a clumsy comforter, and, besides, he was not sure that Mrs. Loveland would care to see him. He did not know of the tender heart, up there in the mansion on the hill, that yearned for the companionship of the little woman whose life Harry's unkindness had embittered. He did not know that a letter laden with womanly compassion had already gone from that house, bidding Paula to come to dwell with Mrs. Loveland, now that Harry was there no more.

But to-night it looked as if the Loveland funeral on the morrow would have to be held without the presence of Bush Parwin; for Bush was wise enough to know that the charge of assault was not the only charge that might be brought against him when he should face Judge Tibbles again. He remembered the constant spying that had attended him since the night of the murder; he remembered with regret a call he had paid upon Lawyer Sanders. That the Deerings suspected him of the murder occurred to him as the real reason for his lodgment in the town jail. But declining to worry, he focused his attention upon the setting-up drills.



He essayed to tear open the envelope. But his fingers had lost their power of control and the letter fell to the floor.

"Arms vertical, palms to the front! Raise! Down! Up! Down!" And while his knees remained rigid and unbent, he touched the earthen floor with the flat of his palms, so vigorously did he apply himself to the exercise.

After a bit of this back-breaking work, he paused for breath in his dark prison house, and suddenly he stopped puffing and breathed not at all, for some one was moving just outside the jail and some one called stealthily:

"Oh, you Bush Parwin!"

"Who's there?" answered the prisoner.

"Never mind who," spoke the voice outside. "But listen, Bush! I've got a crosscut saw. I'm going to slip it under the door to you, and you can saw your way out of there in ten minutes. These logs are so old they'll cut like a watermelon. I'd do the sawing for you,

Bush, only I've got a boil on my thumb, and my hand's out of commish. Can you hear?"

"I get you," Bush answered through the wall. "But who are you?"

"Me? I'm nobody you know, Bush, but I know you. Do you remember the day in little old Chicago last May when you and Peters worked that double steal on Finnegan? Well, I was the guy that got put out of the stand for heaving a pop bottle at you. I'm sorry I heaved it, Bush, but you know how a guy feels when he sees his home team go up in the air. He feels like murder, that's how he feels. I'm squaring up for the pop bottle to-night, Bush. Here's the saw, coming through under the door. Now you can steal a base on these rubes and make a home run out of it, besides."

"Thanks, old man," said Bush. "But how am I going to know who you are, so I can make it up to you some day?"

"I'll tell you," replied the voice. "I don't want no reward for doing a baseball player a kindness. A guy that's a real guy does them things for the love of it. But listen, Bush! It looks to me like the Goliaths and the White Sox was going to play the world's series between 'em this year. Don't it to you?"

"That's the way it looks, bo, unless all the dope fails."

"Well, say, Bush, you don't suppose you could pass me into one of them Chicago games next October, do you?"

"I'll do it if it uses up all the pull I've got left. Who'll I send the pass to?"

"Send it to Bill McQuoid, care of H. K. Hamlin, Coal and Lumber, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and I'll get it all right."

"I'll remember. Say, Bill, what's the talk around the hotel about me being here in this dungeon?"

"Do you want me to tell you?"

"Sure I do."

"Well, Bush, them liars up there says you're the guy that croaked Loveland. That's why I rustled the saw for you.

It belongs to a carpenter at the head of the lane, and he don't know I borrowed it."

"I'll see that he gets it back. You're a good fellow, Bill."

"The same to you," answered the Hamlin chauffeur, made happy for life by the hero's compliment. "Well, over the top, Bush, with the best of luck, and give 'em hell!"

With that the friend in need made tracks toward town. Bush listened until he could hear his footfalls no longer. He stooped down at the door and felt over the damp floor until his fingers found the cold steel blade of the saw that his rescuer had slipped under for him. Then he sat down on the ill-smelling bunk and gave himself up to a half hour of hard thinking.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

The train known as the six-ten carried Tom Dolan away from Wells Lake toward Lambert Junction and the cities beyond. At the Junction, the ancient locomotive would cut loose from its cars, pass on to the turntable, and head around toward Wells Lake again, and the train would arrive back at the lake as the seven-fifty.

As Tom rose in the smoker that Sunday evening, looking out sadly at the woods and feeling homesick already, he heard the voice of Charlie Buford at his side:

"Lo, Tom!"

"Howdy, Charlie!"

"Going for a trip, Tom?"

"Yep! Going to Chicago to look for a job, Charlie."

"Wish you luck, Tom."

"Thanks, Charlie."

The express messenger went back to his duties in the baggage compartment. Presently the conductor came in from the car behind. A gruff old railroader was Amos Little, and perhaps he was entitled to his gruffness, considering

that he had run back and forth on the Wells Lake branch for twenty monotonous years.

"How are you, Tom?"

"How are you, Amos?"

"Leaving town, Tom?"

"That's the way it looks, Amos."

"Well, Tom, I've been leaving town three times a day for a good many years, but I always manage to land back again. You'll be back, Tom."

But the neighborly sympathy of the express messenger and the conductor failed to comfort Tom Dolan. When the little train reached Lambert Junction, he was still suffering from a heavy sense of being alone and friendless and, worst of all, jobless.

He descended to the station platform to wait for the southbound express. The Sunday-afternoon northbound train had dropped a number of passengers at the junction, and now, while the Wells Lake locomotive ran ahead to the turntable, these passengers boarded the cars he had just left. He watched them enviously. They were lucky people; they were going toward the only place on earth that would ever be home to him.

A tall, spare, middle-aged man and a stouter, older man were the last to climb the steps, and at sight of them, Tom snatched up his satchel from the ground and jumped for the steps himself. Into the car he followed the pair and halted beside their seat. The stout man looked up with a smile of recognition.

"Why, hello, Dolan!"

"Hello, Colonel Kenton!"

The stout man turned to his companion.

"Benvil, you know Dolan, don't you? Everybody knows Tom. He's our policeman up at the lake. Dolan, this is my son-in-law, Mr. Benvil. How's things with you, Tom?"

"Things aren't very well with me, colonel. In fact, I'm on my way to

Chicago to see you and Mr. Benvil. But as long as you're here, I'll go back to the lake with you."

Benvil's eyes had been searching Tom's face keenly.

"You were going to the city to see us, you say?"

"Yes, sir, to see you in particular. I've been bounced from my job on account of the murder Friday night, and——"

"Sit in here with us," and Benvil removed his traveling bag from the seat in front of him.

The ancient locomotive coupled up for its run back to the lake, the southbound express drew in on the opposite side of the station and steamed out again, the Wells Lake train started with a jolt and went rattling away through the woods on its homeward journey; and all the while Dolan, Kenton, and Benvil held earnest confabulation. Charlie Buford, looking in from the door of the baggage car, would have given a year of his young life to know what the three were saying, and so would Conductor Amos Little.

It was almost dark when the train pulled into Wells Lake. Tom led the way around the back of the station, thus avoiding the people on the platform. His brother's car was waiting for possible passengers, and Tom's bobwhite whistle brought the Kid himself on the run.

"What the deuce!" exclaimed the younger Dolan. "I thought you'd be fifty miles down the road by now, Tom."

"Get in," said Tom Dolan. "I've got a job for you."

He beckoned to Benvil and Kenton, waiting in the shadows, and when they had entered the back seat, he climbed up in front beside his brother.

"Where to, Tom?"

"East Cove."

Through the town sped the car, past the Loveland mansion with its blot of

crape on the white doorpost; past the Reverend Augustus Reasoner's church, whose stained-glass windows glowed handsomely in the twilight, and from whose open doors came the music of a pipe organ; past Loveland Park and the last straggling houses at the end of town; and so into the farming country beyond. Over a succession of hills the Kid drove, and looked down at last upon the dim woods and misty waters of the arm of the lake known to the natives as East Cove.

It was a wild and lonely region, this East Cove region, and too far away from the town to be popular with campers. As the road became narrower, the Kid drove more carefully. They had descended to the valley now; the way was winding and thickly overhung with trees, and the lamps of the car shone only a little distance ahead. Branches wet with dew scraped the sides of the car, and a breath of cool, damp air told that the lake was near at hand.

The Kid brought the car to a stop in a clearing on the shore, and the four men got out. There was a camp in the clearing, a camp whose commodiousness was out of keeping with the wildness of the surroundings. There was a big dwelling house buttressed with wide porches. A garage, an ice house, and living quarters for servants stood in the rear, and a boathouse projected into the lake. The windows were dark; no light showed in any of the buildings.

"Hello, house!" Tom Dolan shouted. The woods echoed: "House!"

The men mounted the veranda steps. Tom knocked at a door, but there was no response. He turned the knob and found the door locked. Benvil and the Kid examined the windows of the lower story; all were fastened securely. Then the four intruders sat down on the steps leading to the boathouse wharf and held council. A clover lawn spread carpet-like from their feet to the edge of the

woods. The air was spicy with the fragrance of nasturtiums.

"There ought to be somebody around, even if she's gone," said the colonel. "She keeps three or four servants—or she did in the old days. She used to run a regular Newport establishment here."

"Say, by golly!" cried the Kid. "I was out here last Saturday week and hauled two hired girls to the station for her, with their baggage. I'll bet you she fired 'em that day."

Tom stepped down to the boathouse and peered in at a window.

"Her boat's here," he reported. "It's up on planks. Hasn't been put into the water this season, I guess."

Something that leaned against the window casing caught his eye.

"A crowbar," he said. "Just what we want."

Returning to the porch, he slipped the business end of the bar under the window and bore down on the handle. With a sound of tearing wood, the window slid upward. Tom stepped inside and struck a match.

He found himself in a room that was furnished luxuriously. His one step across the window sill had borne him from the Wisconsin wilds into a palace that might have belonged to some Oriental rajah, except that it was provided with the Occidental improvement of acetylene illumination. In a minute the lower rooms were brightly lighted, and the interlopers looked around curiously at a magnificence of rugs and tapestries, easy-chairs and couches, cut glass and Haviland and silver.

"Mrs. Greeley had a lot of money to spend," the colonel commented, and Benvil nodded grimly. Perhaps he recalled that some of the same money had helped to bring about the destruction of his own happiness.

Everywhere they saw evidences of the missing Mrs. Greeley, the woman at whose name the town of Wells Lake

scoffed behind Luther Loveland's back. Here was an easel with a landscape painting upon it—a painting half finished, and not badly done, so far as the woman had gone with it. There was a piano with some of her music on the rack—a Chopin waltz, a Chaminade nocturne. A woman of taste and refinement Mrs. Greeley might have been called. On the table lay a ball of gray yarn with a sock and a pair of celluloid needles beside it. Mrs. Greeley had been knitting for the soldiers.

Tom had gone upstairs with his matches, and now he called over the rail of the balcony:

"Come up here, will you?"

The others followed him and halted a little awed and embarrassed at the door of Mrs. Greeley's boudoir. The floor of the room was in disarray; upon the rugs were various articles of clothing—a dress, a skirt, a pair of shoes, left lying about as if the owner had had no time to put them away in the wardrobe.

It was not to the clothing on the floor that Tom Dolan pointed, however, but to a black revolver that lay on the lace-covered dresser top, and to a letter stuck in the mirror behind it. The letter was sealed, and bore the simple direction: "For Luther Loveland."

The front of the Loveland mansion was dark when young Dolan's car rolled back into town from East Cove, but a light shone from the library at the side, where Luther Loveland sat brooding over the end of his hopes and his happiness. All that he counted dear in the world had been bound up in his son, and in the boy's death all his dreams had gone down in crashing ruin.

Somewhere in the house a bell rang, and rang again. The rest of the household had retired, so he answered the summons himself. At the door stood Tom Dolan and Joseph Benvil. He led them to the library.

"Mr. Loveland," said Tom, "we think we know who killed Harry. We think this letter will tell you."

He held out the letter he had found in Mrs. Greeley's mirror. Loveland took it with a shaking hand, recognized the handwriting of the superscription, and essayed to tear open the envelope. But his fingers had lost their power of control and the letter fell to the floor.

"Shall I open it for you, sir?"

Loveland clutched Benvil's arm.

"Steady me a minute," he begged.

"I'm—I'm not very well."

Gently they helped the old man into his chair.

"Yes, Tom, open it, please."

Now the letter lay on the table before him, and Loveland read. As his eyes ran down the page, he bent lower and lower over the table, slowly, as a great tree falls. At the end of the letter, his head dropped forward upon his arms.

They saw his big shoulders heave with sobs; they heard a moan from his lips—a querulous, inarticulate moan like that of an animal in pain. They looked away abashed, for they had seen a strong man break, and the sight is not one that manly eyes can bear.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Tom Dolan grew to understand it all in the days after the town commission had, at Luther Loveland's command, reinstated him in his job as the Wells Lake constable. Bit by bit it came to him, as he patrolled Main Street again, until his laggard imagination had filled in every detail of the picture. What Benvil had told him, riding over in the train that Sunday evening from Lambert Junction, helped him more than anything else to reconstruct the event as it occurred.

Again he saw the street with its waiting cars, with its crowd around the post office. Again he saw Harry Loveland emerge from Doc Garner's and stride



up the street in search of Maisie Kenton. He saw Maisie enter the Hamlin car and sit down to rest there, away from the crowd. There Harry Loveland discovered her, and in the car the two sat talking, unnoticed by the sidewalk idlers. Then the train came in to add its share to the business of the scene, and upon it was Benvil. From the station he walked to Garner's, seen by no one save his wife, her party of girls, and the druggist. From Garner's he went toward the Grand Palace Hotel to secure a room for the night, for he did not mean to visit Elk Island this year. As he picked his way among the automobiles, a shot rang out—the "back-fire" that had startled the street.

Now, in Dolan's picture, Maisie and Benvil knelt beside a body on the ground, hidden behind the cars, and their faces were white with horror.

"Dead!" gasped Benvil. "Maisie, sister, who did it? Not—not you?"

"No, not I. But I saw—— Oh, John, I daren't tell even you!"

"Come away," he said, and led her down the lane to the docks. "Who did it?" he asked again.

"It was Mrs. Greeley," she answered, shuddering. "I saw her steal along behind the cars; I saw her watching us; and just as Harry stepped down, she fired. Then she put her hand on the door that Harry had just closed, and she leaned over to me and said, 'They've broken hearts enough, darling, these Lovelands. They shan't break yours!' Before I could answer or cry out, she ran off into the churchyard. You came up just as I dropped at Harry's side. Oh, John, John, what shall we do?"

"Are you afraid they'll think you did it, sister?"

"No, no, John. It's you I'm afraid for. Everybody knows, everybody expected it long ago. John, you must get away. Don't you see? You mustn't stay here a minute."

"And leave you alone to face them?"

"John, don't talk about my facing them. Nobody will suspect me. Go for your own sake, and for little Jack's—and for mine. You can come back, but if you are seen here to-night——"

"Bert knows I'm here. So do the rest of them. I saw them in the drug store."

"But no one else knows. Please, John! If you knew what people have been saying——"

"We must tell them what you saw, Maisie."

"Tell them nothing! If we told, who would believe us, after what you've borne from him? And if they did believe us, think what it would mean to poor Mrs. Loveland—to know that her son had been killed by the woman who has wronged her all these years! No, John, let us keep still, at least until they ask us. Please!"

Then Benvil, horror-stricken, taking her advice against his own judgment, yet to save his wife, his sister-in-law, and his son from the ill fame that Maisie feared, had hastened back to Chicago, only to return with Colonel Kenton on Sunday, resolved to speak the truth. Tom Dolan felt that if he had been in Benvil's place, he would have done as Benvil did.

Bit by bit there came to him, too, a comprehension of the part played in the tragedy by the woman of East Cove. In common with the other villagers, he knew the history of that elegant camp on the lonely shore; he knew the hidden shame it had brought upon the town, and the years of heartache that a saintly woman had silently borne because of it. He had heard, too, of Loveland's recent break with the woman. She had grown old now, and Luther Loveland had forsaken her as he had forsaken his own wife years before. There had been a scene at the bank one day——

A week or so later, when a fishing boat reported finding the body of a drowned woman afloat in East Cove,

Tom Dolan did not need to be told whose body it was.

But all this enlightenment was not vouchsafed to the Deering Brothers, Detectives, Incorporated. In vain Daniel Deering besieged the Loveland door on the morning of the day of the funeral, demanding an audience with Luther Loveland. In vain he insisted upon verifying a brief note he had received at the Grand Palace Hotel that morning, in which the millionaire discharged him from further duty in the case and asked him to submit his bill for services rendered.

Angrily Deering hastened to Judge Tibbles' house at the other end of town, only to have his wrath increased at finding little Bush Parwin seated on the porch with the judge and smoking one of the judge's stogies with every appearance of comfort and enjoyment.

"What are you doing here?" Deering demanded. "I left you in jail."

"I didn't like the smell of the bedding," said Bush, "so I sawed my way out and spent the rest of the night at Mr. Gifford's tavern. You needn't look so peeved about it, though. I'm here in his honor's custody, and whenever you're ready to prosecute me for spanking your fat spy, just begin. You may fire when ready, Gridley."

"Mr. Parwin was telling me just now," spoke up Judge Tibbles, stroking his goatee, "that he expects to join the army and go to fight with General Pershing in France. I think we should commend him highly for that resolution, and show lenience toward him for taking offense at an unwarranted invasion of his constitutional rights as a citizen of the United States. If your employee was indeed looking at him through the keyhole—and there was no denial of that from you last night—then I don't feel that we need to put the young man to any further inconvenience. Ah, my boy," he continued, turning to Bush, "if I were a lad like you

again, how quickly I would join you at the colors!"

"We'd make the bloody Huns run like the devil, you and I," said Bush. "Say, by the way, Deering, why don't you join the army yourself? They need cooks mighty bad—and you know what a lovely hash you're making of this murder case."

When Deering had gone growling away, Tom Dolan entered the Tibbles gate.

"Here you are, little man," said he to Bush. "I heard downtown that you'd been jailed for the murder, so I came to look you up. If you need to prove an alibi, just remember that you and I took care of the woman in the automobile with the hysterics—I mean the woman with the hysterics in the automobile—a couple of seconds after the shot was fired. Doc Garner recollects you, too. You went in to get a glass of water, remember, and left your club at his soda fountain. It's two hundred feet from Garner's to the spot where the shooting happened, so I guess you're safe enough."

"He is safe enough, I guess," echoed Judge Tibbles, with a fatherly smile to the suspect.

So the Loveland mystery remained a mystery to all except a few. Bush Parwin knew, and carried the knowledge to France with him, for Tom Dolan told him enough to assure him that no suspicion would follow him away from Wells Lake. John Joseph Benvil knew, and Maisie knew, and Harry's mother and Colonel Kenton and young Dolan could guess. But the full secret is locked up in the heart of the shattered old man whose own acts supplied the cause that led to his son's death—the cause that Daniel Deering failed to take into account.

It is a subdued household now in the mansion on the hill. There three women, Mrs. Loveland and Paula and Paula's little mother, sit together for

hours without speaking, each busy with her own thoughts, while the little boy who rode "Nunky Bush's" shoulders plays at their feet. Sometimes Luther Loveland looks at the child with strange, wondering eyes; sometimes, in his absent-minded moments, he calls the little fellow "Harry." But the child and the womenfolk pay small attention to him now, for he is only the shadow of a man. His form is still big to the eye, but his friends at the chess club and in the street know that he is little more than the ghost of the Luther Loveland of other days.

Now and then Miss Farnum drops in to pay a cheery call; on which occasions she quotes a great many of the wise and comforting sayings of the Reverend Doctor Appleby, whose motto is still, "No compromise with Satan." Stanch friends are the dominie and the spinster, and some people say there is sure to be at least one wedding in Wells Lake in the spring.

On one of her visits, it was upon the tip of Miss Farnum's tongue to repeat a piece of gossip that she had heard. Mrs. John Joseph Benvil had said to an acquaintance in the village:

"Yes, they tell me my husband made a million dollars last year. And to think he never let me know! Wasn't he horrid? And then for him to go and sue me for a divorce, besides, after I'd been his wife in his poverty! Oh, these men!"

But good Miss Farnum throttled her piece of gossip just in time, and bit her tongue so hard that it was sore for the rest of the week.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

Now ends our story; and since stories should end happily, we can do no better than to visit the city home of the Kentons. They have moved from St. Louis to Chicago, so that the colonel may be

near his job in the new Benvil Steel and Iron Corporation. It is evening, and the colonel is dozing in his armchair. On the hearth little Jack Benvil is building a structural-steel skyscraper that will reach as high as the mantel, if the bolts continue to hold.

"Look, Aunt Maisie!" the boy cries, and dark-eyed Maisie looks up from her magazine to admire the product of the young engineer's skill.

"Any letter from Bert to-day?" asks the colonel.

"Yes," answers Maisie. "She's at Palm Beach and having the time of her life, she says."

By and by the colonel rises and crosses to Maisie's chair. His hand rests upon her head caressingly.

"Daughter, has Benvil spoken to you yet?"

"No, daddy."

"Well, he's going to."

"How do you know?"

"He told me so."

"Why do you tell me this?"

"Because I want to issue a warning, a manifesto, and an ultimatum. My daughter, that man is the best man on earth. When he speaks to you, I shall expect you to say the proper thing back. That's all. One fool daughter in a family is all the family can stand."

The colonel stalks away to his den to hunt for a cigar. Maisie rests her chin on the folded magazine and looks dreamily into the fire. At last she comes back to things present.

"Jack, come here to me."

The engineer leaves his construction job and obeys. To his astonishment, he is seized in his aunt's arms and kissed on his lips with a kiss that is warmer than an aunt's kisses generally are.

"What makes your eyes so wet?" he asks, looking up at her.

But his Aunt Maisie's answer is another kiss.

# The Care of the Hair

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

THE hair is a highly specialized prolongation of the outermost layer of the body's covering known as the *epidermis*. Its roots are lodged in bulbs called hair follicles, which are situated in the layer below, called the *derma* or true skin. At the bottom of the hair follicle is a tiny oval body called the hair papilla, which is the germ of the hair, and it is from this papilla that the hair receives its nourishment; for, like the outermost layer of the skin, the hair itself does not contain blood vessels.

A hair consists of three parts—the shaft, which is that portion extending beyond the surface of the skin; the root, which is imbedded in the true skin or derma and is contained within the hair follicle; and an expanded portion, which rests upon and incloses the hair papilla.

To the naked eye, a shaft of hair presents a perfectly smooth, uniform surface of equal thickness throughout. Under the microscope, however, it is seen that the outer layer of a hair shaft consists of scales; also, that it is a hollow tube varying in thickness according to its nature and character. Crinkly or wavy hair is so because it varies continually in thickness throughout its entire length; whereas straight hair has throughout the same size and form.

The so-called "permanent wave" is an attempt to produce a crinkle or wave where nature has bestowed hairs of uniform size and form. Fine, smooth, straight hair is a higher product than crinkled.

Under the microscope, the granules or pigment cells that give to the hair its individual coloring are also seen. Whitening of the hair is ascribed by Metchnikoff to *pigment-devouring cells*—an interesting theory borne out by the fact that many cases of white hair are found in quite young people, especially in those whose hair was originally jet black and coarse, while in others the pigment cells remain intact far into old age.

*Cold water changes the color of the hair.*

The hair is a nonconductor of heat and it protects the underlying surface from heat as well as from cold. In prehistoric days, it was doubtless man's only covering, but the need of its protection still remains in those parts which are exposed to the elements. Women are less likely to contract colds in the head and are less liable to sunstroke than men, because of the abundant growth of hair upon their heads.

Another feature of the hair is its power to absorb moisture. This is a fact to be remembered when the hair becomes dry and harsh from any cause,

during warm weather or when traveling in hot climates, for under these conditions it requires—because it absorbs more—additional moisture, and nature must be aided by tonics if the hair is to be preserved and kept in good condition.

Hair does not continue to grow indefinitely. New hair grows more rapidly during its first two years, after which its growth becomes perceptibly slower. Many women complain that their hair grows quite rapidly for a while, and then nothing will stimulate it to keep up the pace. No; because that is its nature. Hairs grow in groups of three or four. One of the four grows faster than the other three, thus accounting for inequality in length. When one of the group falls out, the others grow faster; also thicker, stronger, and darker. Growth depends upon the seasons, also.

When a hair reaches its natural length, it falls out and is immediately replaced by another; the length varies from twenty to thirty-six inches. This length has been exceeded in women, who have been known to have hair six feet long. Hair attains its growth usually in from two to six years, varying greatly in different people. That repeated cutting and trimming of the hair stimulates its growth is another popular fallacy; cutting retards its growth. The hair is like a plant in that it is dwarfed by repeated cutting and trimming, as a plant is. This is plainly noted in hedges and in the miniature trees cultivated by the Japanese. Cutting and trimming also have the effect of increasing each individual hair in *width* while retarding growth in length; in other words, each hair is thickened in width and stunted in length.

Since the hair, like every other tissue in the body, receives and selects its sustenance from the blood, its growth and vitality are dependent upon the general condition of the system. When in

a perfectly healthy state, the hair selects lime, manganese, sulphur, and iron from the blood, but if for any reason its condition is such that it cannot maintain itself, it throws so much more nourishment and so much more work on other portions of the body. Considered from this viewpoint, the hair immediately assumes more importance than is usually assigned to it, and the necessity, apart from purely cosmetic reasons, of keeping it in a high state of health at once becomes apparent.

An abundant growth of hair has from time immemorial been regarded as a mark of beauty in women and of strength in men; it is undoubtedly indicative of vigor, power, and health. More than any other part of the body, the hair reflects the underlying condition of the system. In sickness of any kind, it is always affected. In some constitutional diseases, it is rapidly lost, and it never fails to show the impress of nervous troubles. From this it will be seen that the hair, contrary to popular belief, is very sensitive. It is just as responsive to and as grateful for proper care and treatment as is a highly sensitive plant. All those who possess luxurious hair should prize it sufficiently to give it careful daily grooming, and those who do not should take every possible measure to cultivate it.

#### ON THE DAILY TREATMENT OF THE HAIR.

The hair has been compared to a plant; the scalp may be compared to its soil. Neither the plant nor the hair can grow properly if the soil is poor. The scalp should be thick, soft, and pliable, moving freely over the bones of the skull. If it is thin, it contains few blood vessels and is not well nourished; if it fits the skull too tightly, not only is the circulation feeble, but the hair roots are apt to suffer from compression. The scalp is also the seat of many sebaceous or oil glands, which communicate with the hair, imparting

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to it a rich gloss. These oil glands also nourish the scalp and keep it in good condition.

The first object in the care of the hair is *cleanliness*. Few understand the meaning of this word when applied to the hair and scalp. Too often the hair is given only as much attention as is absolutely needed to keep it reasonably clean and neat, and never receives *special* care unless some diseased condition demands it.

One of the many popular fallacies regarding the hair is that frequent shampooing is injurious; nothing could be farther from the truth. Certain ingredients that go to make up a shampoo may be harmful, such as strong ammonia, salts

of tartar, cheap soaps containing lye, and other products of a similar nature that have the effect of drying out and, in time, rotting the hair. Frequent shampooing is also injurious when the hair is not thoroughly dried afterward, *and when cold water is used*. Men are very apt to be careless in this respect. They also have the very bad habit of wetting the hair each time it is brushed

and keeping it in a constant state of moisture. Naturally this macerates the scalp and in time the hair falls out.

The frequency with which the head should be shampooed depends entirely upon the grooming it receives daily and upon one's occupation. Those exposed to much dust and engaged in traveling

about constantly require more frequent shampooing than others. The nature of the shampoo is of paramount importance; the practice of using anything from ammonia, common kitchen soap, and so forth, to the strongest alkalis, cannot be too strongly condemned. As remarked elsewhere, the hair is exceedingly sensitive and resents such treatment. Use, there-



Brushing cleanses and beautifies the hair.

fore, a bland preparation of known worth, which will not only have the effect of freeing the hair and scalp from its accumulation of soil and grime, but will leave it in a perfectly healthy condition.

Absolute cleanliness of the hair must be maintained during the intervals of a liquid shampoo by daily unremitting care, the principal feature of which is



A dry shampoo serves many purposes.

brushing. This does not mean a *scrubbing* of the scalp, setting up an irritation that will result in dandruff and other troubles, but such brushing as will free the hair and scalp from dust and grime. For this purpose the hairbrush must be clean and free from the accumulated debris of yesterday's brushing.

In the summer, when the scalp perspires more freely, and at other seasons if moisture of the scalp exists, nothing equals the cleansing and absorbent qualities of a *dry* shampoo. A dry shampoo consists of equal parts of refined cornmeal and powdered orris root. The hair should be separated into strands, the powder applied with absorbent cotton, thoroughly rubbed over the scalp and through the hair, allowed to remain for a half or a full hour, and then carefully and thoroughly brushed

out. This process leaves the hair dry, fluffy, and sweet.

The character of a liquid shampoo should depend upon the character and condition of the hair. For ordinary purposes, the following is excellent:

White castile soap.....	1 ounce
Potassium carbonate.....	1 dram
Borax .....	2 drams
Cologne water.....	2 ounces
Bay rum.....	2 ounces
Water to make.....	32 ounces

Dissolve the soap in the water by the aid of heat, occasionally replacing water lost by evaporation. In the solution dissolve the borax and potassium carbonate; then add the cologne water and bay rum, and filter.

When the condition of the scalp demands nourishment, an egg shampoo is indicated:

Yolks of four eggs.

Spirit of soap.....	3½ ounces
Ammonia water.....	3 drams
Oil of lemon.....	45 minims
Oil of geranium.....	15 minims
Water to make.....	27 ounces

Beat the egg yolks, mix thoroughly with the other ingredients by agitation, and strain.

For brown or black hair, a tar shampoo is required. Oil of tar may be added in sufficient quantity to either of the above mixtures, or the following may be made up:

Green or soft soap.....	3 ounces
Potassium carbonate.....	½ ounce
Oil of tar.....	½ dram
Alcohol .....	4 ounces
Water to make.....	16 ounces

Dryness of the scalp is often remedied by frequent shampooing alone, contrary to another popular belief. When, for any reason, such as impoverishment of the blood, feeble circulation, tightness of the scalp, and so forth, the dryness

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continues, an appropriate tonic should be applied. If the scalp and hair are exceedingly dry, olive oil applied to the roots and scalp with a soft sponge at bedtime will be found extremely nourishing. All excess of oil should be removed, or a nightcap of some sort should be worn to prevent soiling of the bedclothing. If the oil is rubbed into the scalp instead of merely applied to it, improvement will be more quickly noticed.

An ointment for dry scalp and hair consists of:

Wool fat, hydrous.....	1 ounce
White petrolatum.....	1 ounce
Oil of lemon flowers.....	5 drops

Apply to the scalp with the tips of the fingers about three times a week.

Dry, split hair is usually due to some constitutional trouble, although it may be the result of bleaching and burning the hair with hot tongs. If the general health is below normal, a course of iron is indicated. Locally, all split ends should be trimmed, and the scalp and hair subjected to oil baths with steady, gentle massage for at least ten minutes night and morning. This will stimulate the circulation and tone up the nerves, while the oil will supply the necessary nourishment. Hair tonics containing oil have proven of value; also those that stimulate the glands of the scalp to greater activity.

A stimulating lotion for dry hair contains:

Tincture of capsicum.....	3 drams
Tincture of cantharides.....	3 drams
Aromatic spirits of ammonia.....	1½ ounces
Oil of lavender.....	1 dram
Tincture of cinchona.....	2 ounces
Alcohol enough to make.....	16 ounces

The hair usually sheds itself every year, and as a rule this occurs in the autumn. As new hairs are constantly growing in, the loss is not felt, but when the condition is pronounced, resulting in a noticeable thinning of the hair, the cause should be looked into and re-

moved as soon as possible. Marked loss of hair results from neurasthenic conditions, from fevers—especially typhoid and scarlet—and from vice diseases; in all such cases, constitutional remedies directed at the underlying causes will usually have a beneficial effect upon the hair, although local measures are of equal importance. Anæmia also is often a cause of falling hair. As the impoverished blood is unable to supply it with proper nourishment, the hair becomes weak and lifeless and drops out. But local troubles of the scalp are probably more often at the root of this condition. Of these the most common is *dandruff*.

Yes, the most common trouble of the scalp is undoubtedly dandruff, and as falling hair is due most frequently to dandruff, and as this leads to baldness—in men—combating this condition becomes one of the minor important things in life. Fundamental hygienic measures for the care of the hair such as has been outlined above will prevent the trouble arising. When it exists, cleanliness, appropriate tonics, with airings and sunnings of the scalp, will prove very helpful. Cast hats and head coverings aside whenever feasible. It is not always possible to remedy dandruff and baldness, but it is possible to check them.

A very simple means of promoting the growth of hair on old heads, and even of restoring its color when three-score years and ten have been reached, is *pulling* the hair, gently, but very firmly. Even when the growth is so sparse that it is barely possible to find a few stragglers, gently tweezing these sometimes awakens the long dormant hair follicles. Here, as in everything else, persistence is the only thing that wins out. Simple and strange as this procedure appears, it gets results. Try it for a year.

And now a remedy for dandruff. Sulphur is often curative when other

measures fail, and a salve rubbed well into the scalp is more penetrating than a lotion. Here is one:

Precipitated sulphur.....	6 drams
Borax .....	25 grains
White wax.....	6 drams
Paraffin oil.....	4½ ounces
Rose water.....	2 ounces

## WHAT READERS ASK.

MRS. EVELYN S.—Every now and then some one writes me as to the value of *mange cures* for dandruff. During the past year, a man brought action against a large department house doing business in one of our great Eastern cities, for selling him a *mange cure* for dandruff, the use of which injured his scalp. Mange in dogs is a loathsome disease, and has no connection at all with human dandruff.

There are many varieties of this condition, and the treatment will depend upon the character of the affection. One thing is certain—cleanliness applies to all cases. The scalp requires frequent shampooing. A noted scalp specialist in New York City applies the remedy one day and a shampoo the next, and keeps this up for eight weeks. Tincture of green soap is excellent when the dandruff is moist and oily; when it is dry, a shampoo containing egg or one containing oil would be better. Here is one formula for an egg shampoo: Yolk of 4 eggs; spirit of soap N. F., 3¼ ounces; ammonia water, 3 drams; oil of lemon, 45 minims; oil of rose geranium, 15 minims; water, 27 ounces. Beat the egg yolks, mix thoroughly with the other ingredients by agitation, and strain.

The following combination and treatment for dandruff originated with the late Doctor Shoemaker: Salicylic acid, 140 grains; precipitated sulphur, 6 drams; cold cream U. S. P., 7½ ounces. Cleanse the hair with a shampoo; then for six nights rub the above ointment thoroughly into the scalp, and on the seventh night shampoo the head again. After six weeks of this treatment, the dandruff will probably be cured, or at any rate the treatment may be given less frequently.

MRS. DORA J.—I would be only too happy to give the formulæ through this column if they were mine. Both of those you want are proprietary articles; while we know the nature of them, we do not know how they are

prepared like cold cream, and apply to the scalp at bedtime. However, this will prove effective only when proper grooming is part of the daily regimen.

NOTE.—Appropriate treatment for individual cases may be had on proper application; also a reliable formula for bay rum.

put together or what quantities are used. However, you could not make them if you had the formulæ, nor could a small druggist, with his facilities, succeed so well as a large chemical or pharmaceutical house that specializes in such preparations. Again, the small druggist is handicapped, since he cannot procure drugs that are scarce and costly, nor would it pay him to do so, as he would make no profit—indeed, he might sustain a loss. Can I help you in some other way?

HARRIET B.—The following is an excellent formula for liquid soap: Powdered green castile soap, 1 ounce; glycerin, 1 ounce; alcohol, 1 ounce. It is a pleasure to give it to you.

The orange-flower skin food so often mentioned is one of the best for daily face use. The formulæ vary slightly, but I consider this one unequalled: Oil of sweet almonds, 4 ounces; white wax, 6 drams; oil of neroli, 15 drops; oil of orange skin, 15 drops; tincture of benzoin, 30 drops; orange-flower water, 2 ounces.

SIXTEEN.—Complete absence of brows and lashes is a decided deformity, but you have a scant growth, and if there is only an apology, by constant treatment you can increase this. Here is a mixture that has proven its worth: Tincture of cantharides, 3 drams; olive oil, 4 drams; oil of nutmeg, 12 drops; oil of rosemary, 12 drops. Rub it into the *brows* liberally at bedtime, but with great caution into the outer edges of the eyelids. For you must under no circumstances allow the mixture to touch the eyes. I heard from a father the other day whose little girl was completely shorn of her eyelashes. They were constantly disappearing. The family physician could do nothing, so a specialist was consulted who won the child's confidence and learned that she picked them out!

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

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## Who will write the SONG-HIT OF THE WAR?

With this country entering its second year in the "World War" it is doubtful if the song which will be known as the "Hit of the War" has as yet made its appearance. While it is true that such War songs as "Over There" and "Liberty Bell" have made some impression, have Our Boys adopted another "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," which has been the great favorite with the "English Tommies"? Inasmuch as several Commanders of our training camps have requested boys in the service to write such a song it appears to be still wanting.

Have you an idea which topic might be used as the subject for a Patriotic or War Song? If so, you may secure some valuable information and assistance by writing for a Free Copy of our new booklet entitled "SONG WRITERS' MANUAL AND GUIDE." We revise song-poems, compose and arrange music, secure copyright and facilitate free publication or outright sale. Poems submitted examined FREE.

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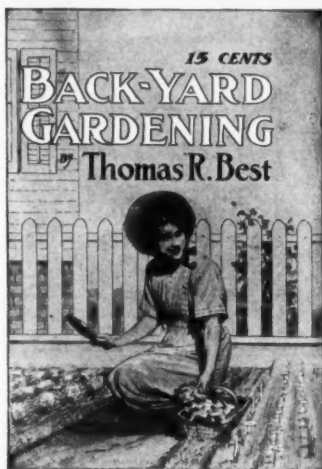
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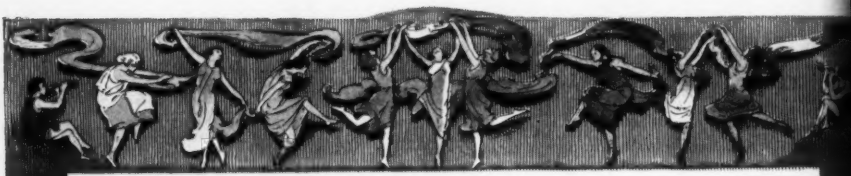
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